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PlayStation
MAGAZINE
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Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 81 (June 2004)

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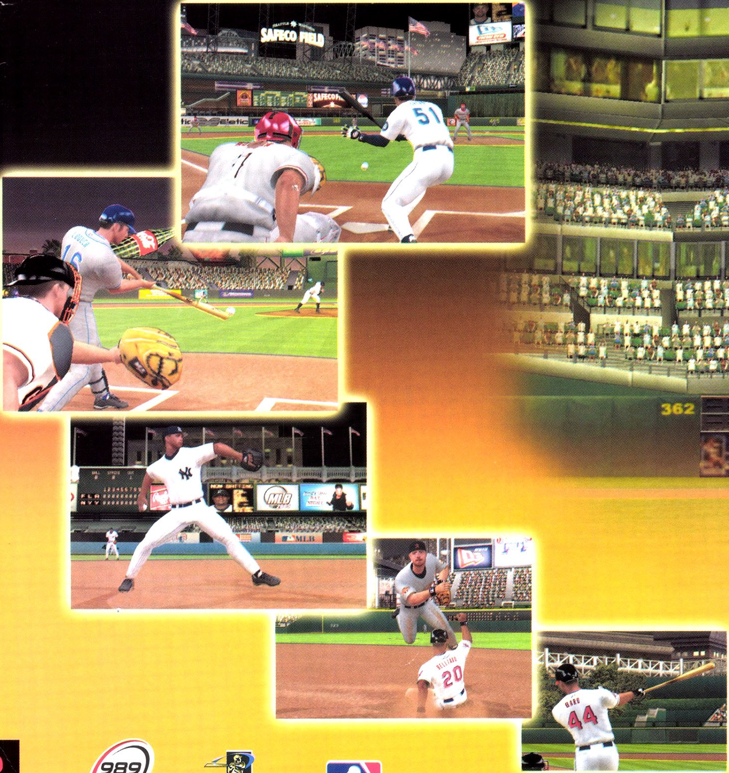

989 SPORTS

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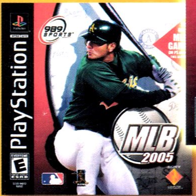
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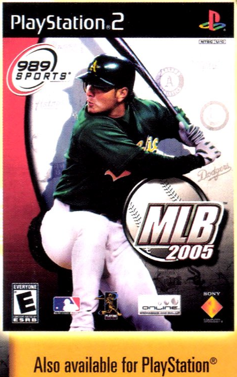
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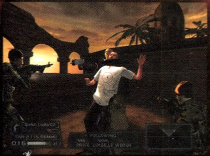

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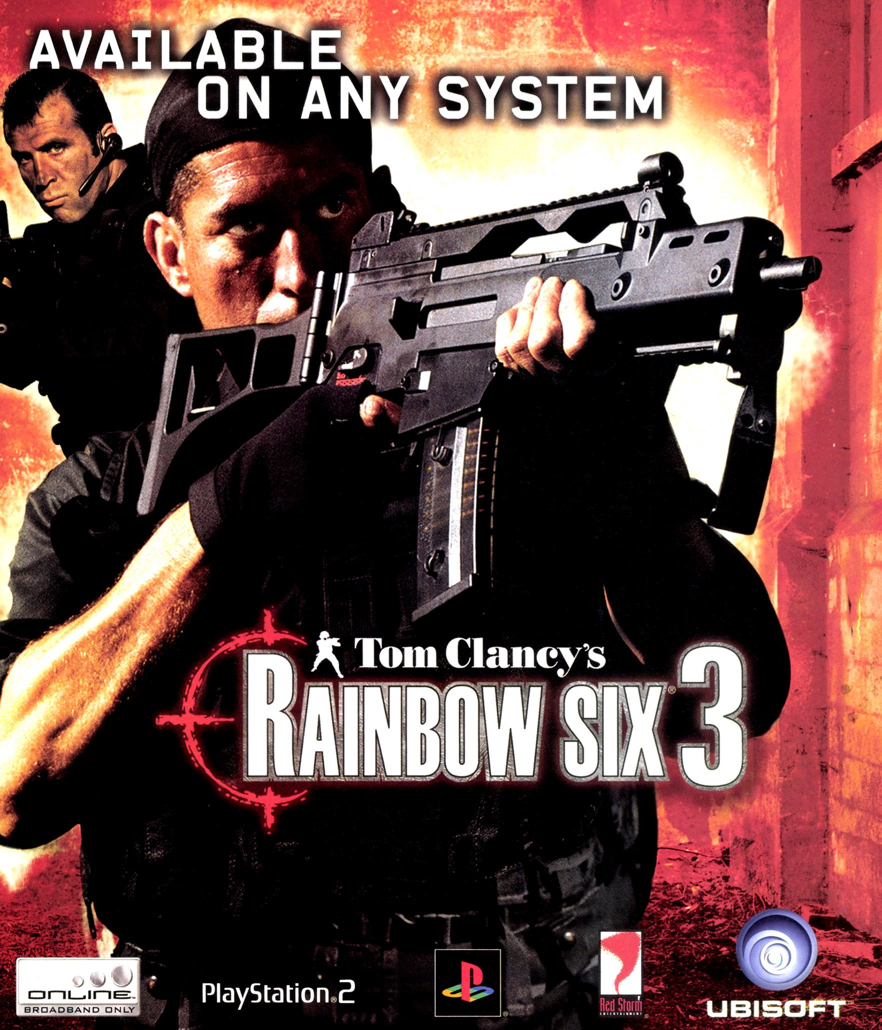
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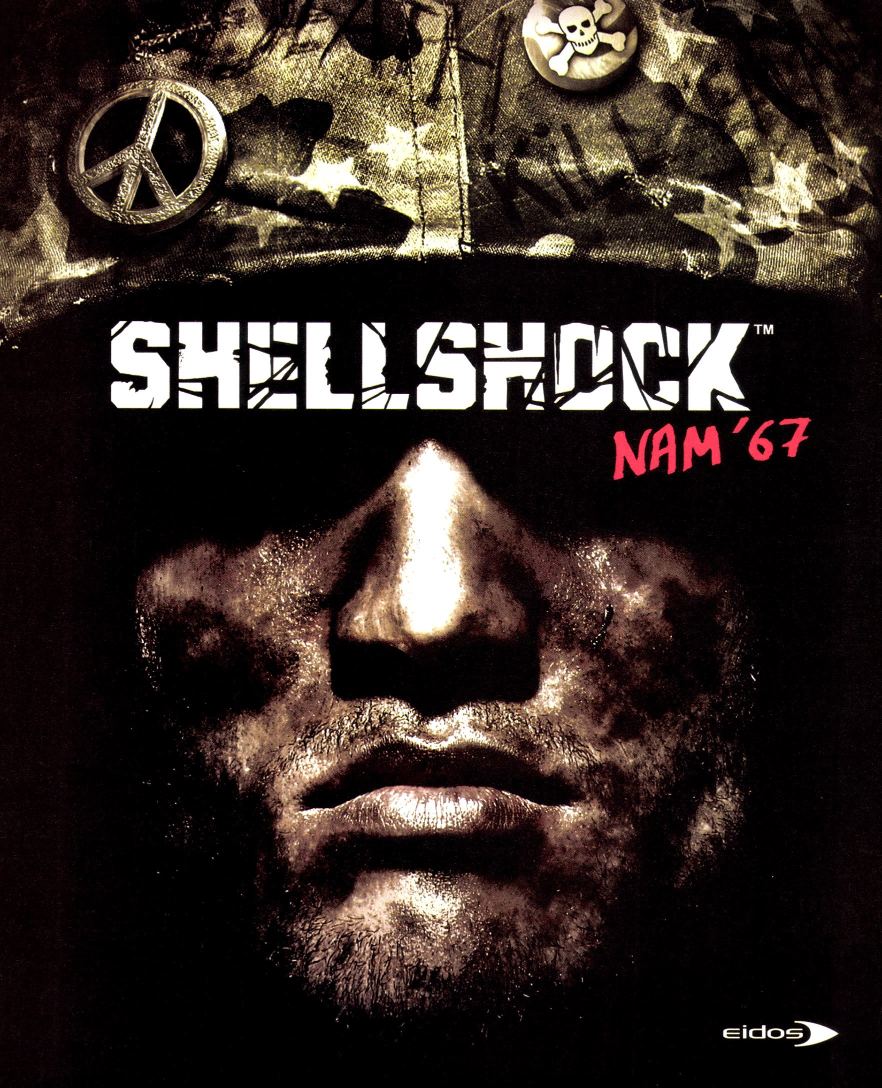

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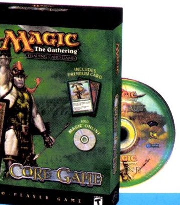
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THE RETURN OF THE KING

Well, *The Return of the King* is great. You know that (is there an *OPM* reader who did not see this film? And if there is, are you nuts?). But it's great not only in itself, but also in the sense that every single person who had invested so much of his or her mental energy loving the first two installments of the film watched it and breathed a huge, shuddering sigh of relief. Peter Jackson, thank Ilúvatar, did not suddenly go insane and drop in some Ewoks. The man stuck the dismount. George Lucas, the lame-duck king of geek films, has been overthrown for one more pure of heart.

Having said that, let's go ahead and grant that, in reality, *King* is the least of the Lord of the Rings films. It is necessarily the biggest of them all, both in spectacle and in running time, and as the biggest, it's also the least personable. The massive battles lack the awesome urgency of the Battle of Helm's Deep in *The Two Towers* (my opinion of that film, incidentally, has only gone up since I reviewed it here). And now that all the major characters are established, we spend just a little time getting into their heads—only Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen) has a substantial character journey this time around as he reluctantly takes up his kingly mantle.

This is why, for me, some of the best parts of *King* come during what is most criticized: the multiple endings. After all the spectacles, we're back to what made the films actually work—the characters themselves and the richness of personality Jackson and his collaborators (including, yes, Tolkien) gave them all. We see the ending of things through them, a much more satisfying conclusion than if the films ended with the fall of Sauron. This is where Jackson proves he is the real Lord of the Rings. He knows what the story is really about: not the One Ring, but those who carried it and journeyed because of it. Smart man. Great film.

●●●●●

IN AMERICA

(Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton)

It's a hell of a thing to pick up from wherever you come from and make the journey to America—yet many of us have ancestors who did, and people are still doing it. *In America* tells the immigrant story in modern times with an Irish family, grieving over a lost child, trying to make it in the U.S. While it tells their story pretty straightforwardly, it's about a lot of other things, from how hope can hurt you to how family can save you...and how what you want, dream, and need for yourself comes from what you already have. A gem.

●●●●○

THE LAST SAMURAI

(Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe)

Here's the cinematic opposite of the immigrant movie—the one in which a dissolute American emigrates to find his soul among people of a foreign culture. Yes, you saw it when it was called *Dances With Wolves*. But now, Kevin Costner is Tom Cruise (who is a Civil War–era soldier), and the noble Lakota are the traditional Japanese warriors, standing up to the barbaric introduction of modern warfare. Otherwise, it's the same basic idea, and it's well done if ultimately not brilliant (it blows the ending). Two high points: Director Ed Zwick knows how to shoot a battle scene (see also: *Glory*), and Ken Watanabe, as the title character, grabs the film right out from under Cruise. Good for Watanabe.

●●●●

THE FOG OF WAR

(Robert McNamara)

Just what the kids want to see: a documentary about Vietnam from the perspective of Robert McNamara, secretary of defense for JFK and LBJ, and the man most responsible for America's involvement in Vietnam. It's a movie you *should* see, since it gives you a bureaucrat's-eye view of how a country gets into a war and, equally important, how we deal with it when the war doesn't roll along like we expect. McNamara himself is a fascinating character, conflicted between guilt and the idea he did necessary things in difficult times.

●●●●●

MIRACLE

(Kurt Russell, Patricia Clarkson)

The U.S. beat the Soviets in hockey at the Olympics in 1980, and by the reaction, you'd have thought we'd just won World War III. But that's 1980 for you, a time when any good news was great news. Miracle does the smart thing by telling the story with none of the usual Hollywood bells and whistles, letting the setting, the team, and most of all, the coach (Herb Brooks, played by Kurt Russell) get on with their business. It is, after all, a story that's pretty dramatic in its own right.

●●●◐○

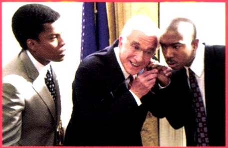
DVD RELEASES

May 4, 2004
Chasing Liberty
The Last Samurai
Peter Pan (2003)
Samurai Jack: Season 1
The Triplets of Belleville

May 11, 2004
The Fog of War
In America
Invader Zim Vol. 1
Scary Movie 3
Survivor: Season 1
The X-Files: Season 9

May 18, 2004
Miracle
Paycheck
Smallville: Season 2
Star Trek Voyager: Season 2
The West Wing: Season 2
You Got Served

May 25, 2004
Bubba Ho-Tep
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Season 6
Cheers: Season 3
Frasier: Season 3
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
Northern Exposure: Season 1
Slaughterhouse Five



SCARY MOVIE 3

(Charlie Sheen, Anna Faris)

Good God, people. Keep encouraging these guys, and they'll keep making more of them. Is that what you really want? Now, I will admit the scene with Jenny McCarthy and Pam Anderson is a hoot, and you can't go wrong with Leslie Nielsen (well, you can. Badly. Just not here). But otherwise, it's like the zombies that will inevitably be spoofed in *Scary Movie 4*: stumbling, dim-witted, lifeless, and begging to be shot through the head and put out of its misery. Please stop going to the films. I'm begging you here.

●◐○○○

BUBBA HO-TEP

(Bruce Campbell, Ossie Davis)

B-movie king Bruce Campbell plays Elvis, who teams up with JFK (Ossie Davis, who, if you didn't know, is black) to battle an Egyptian soul eater in a crappy retirement home in the middle of nowhere. Why are you still reading this review? Run! Run and get this DVD! Actually, you don't need to run, because despite the concept, it ain't brilliant schlock—just pretty good schlock. Still, Campbell rocks, and the fact that this film is any good at all when its plot is straight from the *Weekly World News* is something of a miracle.

●●●○○

PAYCHECK

(Ben Affleck, Uma Thurman)

Not only the name of the film, but also an accurate representation of Affleck's and Thurman's motivation for being present during the shooting of this flat sci-fi thriller in which Affleck plays a techie with a wiped memory, trying to figure out what happened to the last few years of his life. I'm a big fan of director John Woo, but here, the man doesn't have it going on—this could have been done by a Woo wannabe. Even the pleasantly distracting presence of Uma doesn't incline me to think better of it.

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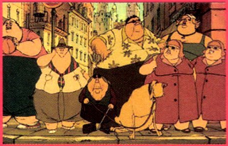

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE

(Michèle Caucheteux, Monica Viegas)

Another one for the "animation isn't just for kids" file: You could show it to kids—just don't be surprised if the next day, they're wearing black and smoking clove cigarettes. This one has a plot of sorts—a grandmother tries to find her bicyclist grandson with the help of some faded musical stars—but that's very much like describing 2001 as "astronauts go into space to find a mysterious object." It misses the sheer unhinged creativity that's going on here, both in the story and in the medium of animation. You'll love it or hate it.

●●●●◐

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118 THE GAME PAD
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120 ESSENTIAL RACING GAMES
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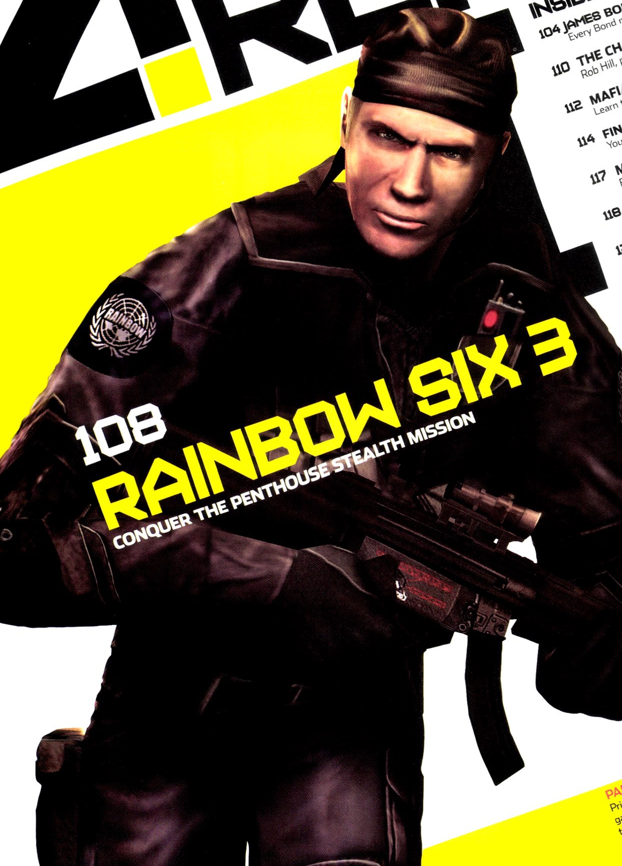

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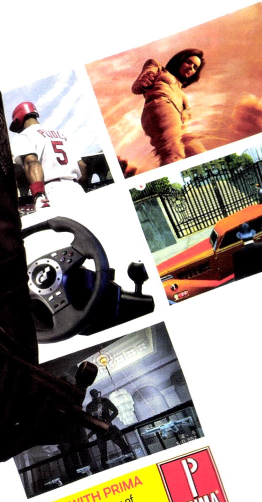
CONQUER THE PENTHOUSE STEALTH MISSION



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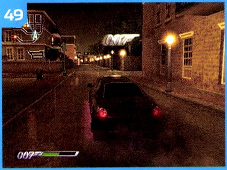
Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides OPM with top-of-the-line strategies every month. In this issue, they shared their expertise on Rainbow Six 3 and Mafia.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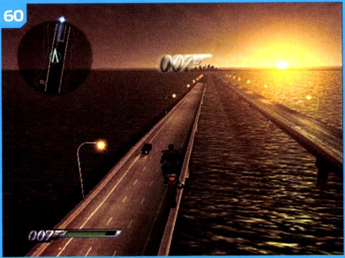
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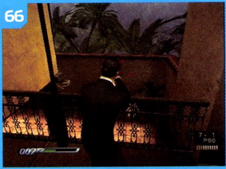
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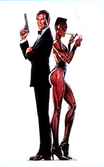
BOND 007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

BE A BONA FIDE BOND AGENT

Any fool can just walk in and start shooting other fools left and right. But it takes a master MI6 agent to finish every mission with honest-to-god style. Racking up Bond moments and points helps you unlock cool stuff (like the Golden Gun or an unlimited battery for your gadgets). We already pointed out every moment in the first half of the game, so here's the second half of Bond moments, just for special 00 agents like you.



GREAT POSTER, CRAPPY BOND AND MOVIE

Nobody can approach Connery, or even Brosnan, in terms of Bond portrayal. But at least *A View to a Kill* has the type of clean, creative poster that the earlier Bond movies are famous for.

DEATH'S DOOR

43 Use the Q-spider path.
44 Defeat the tower sniper in hand-to-hand combat.
45 Prevent the guard from opening the gate.
46 Shoot the lockbox with a sniper rifle.
47 Damage La Rouge using a barrel.
48 Damage La Rouge using a gas pipe.

BATTLE IN THE BIG EASY

49 Use the smoke screen.
50 Destroy the compound with your first RC car.
51 Get to Mya's in time.

FADED SPLENDOR

52 Get to the attic with stealth.
53 Drop the chandelier.
54 Use the Q-spider to find the secret cache.

THE MACHINERY OF EVIL

55 Destroy processing chamber four using the Q-spider.
56 Steam the enemies on the lower floor.
57 Destroy a pipe on the lower floor to grab a rocket launcher.

THE PONTCHARTRAIN BRIDGE

58 Jump over the bayou gate.
59 Blow up the shack full of enemies in the bayou.
60 Take the crane jump.
61 Slide underneath the tanker.

A SIMPLE EXCHANGE

62 Use EMP grenades to knock out the security cameras.
63 Shut off the security lasers.

RED LINE

64 Take both of the jumps on the road past the villa.
65 Take the shortcut just before the villa.

AMBUSHED

66 Destroy the shutter controls.
67 Get into the secret room that holds a rocket launcher.
68 Throw an enemy over the second-floor railing.

THE HIGH ROAD

69 Use the stairs at the fireworks shop as a ramp.
70 Use the stairs at the hotel as a ramp.

DIAVOLO'S PLAN

71 Shoot the propane tanks to take out the guards across the chasm.
72 Use the Q-spider to find the hidden armor.
73 Use the Q-spider to shut off the security lasers.

THE PLATINUM WAR

74 Destroy the tank by collapsing the archway.
75 Blow up the propane tank to create a shortcut.

DANGEROUS DESCENT

76 Destroy the security-laser controls.
77 Use the Q-spider sleeper dart on a vault guard.
78 Hit three enemies simultaneously with the Q-spider blast.

RED UNDERGROUND

79 Find the sniper rifle.
80 Make an enemy fall off the catwalk.
81 Crush someone with the tank.
82 Spray the enemy with the platinum spray.
83 Use the network tap on the platinum tank.
84 Use a strobe grenade to blind the guard with the rocket launcher.

THE FINAL CARD

85 Destroy the second turret using the first turret.
86 Take out all the enemies that attack you after you use the network tap.
87 Take out all the enemies in the last shutoff chamber with the Q-spider.
88 Use the EMP grenade to disable the nano-suited enemy.

EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

89 Open the locked door with the Q-spider.
90 Shoot the hanging cargo container.
91 Find a way to enter the vault. «

68

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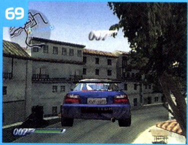

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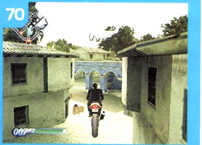

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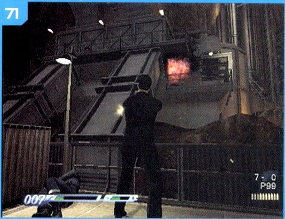

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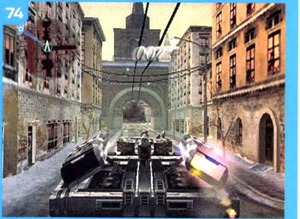

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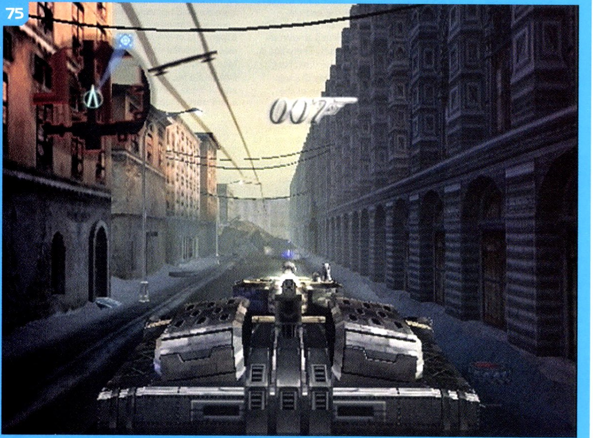

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OBJECTIVE COMPLETE:
Exited shaft
20 - 10
SIG 552
007

83

Network Tap
007

PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in cyan indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. A number **1** indicates its rank in the top-selling games. ⚡indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**51**
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**42**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**64**
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**Interplay**	●●●●◖	**52**
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◗	73
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	●●◖	67
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	Activision	●●◖	76
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◖	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◖	51

BROKEN PROMISES

WHERE'S OUR VIRTUAL REALITY, DAMMIT?

Remember those scenes in *Tekken 4* in which the fighters were surrounded by about 30 observers who would interact with the combatants, shoving them back into the ring and booing or cheering in real time depending on how the fight was going?

No?

That's probably because it *never happened*. But in 1999, when Sony first unveiled the technology of the PS2, a playable *Tekken* demo showed exactly that. So why didn't it make it into the actual game? Because Namco hates you. No, actually, it's because you can do a lot more graphically when you don't have to worry about pause screens and saving and customized controls, all the little things that add up to take a bite out of a system's resources.

But the reason isn't important. The point is, this sort of thing happens all the time. Now, come with us as we take a journey through PS2's past and take a look at some of the things that should have been—but weren't.

ILINK

Remember when we were all looking forward to hooking up our PS2s to video cameras and...er...other things that use iLink? Yeah, that was basically the problem: While iLink (an underpowered version of the more popular FireWire) offers transfer speeds in the area of 30 times that of USB, it's only very recently come into widespread use with consumer electronics. The option of hooking several PS2s together via iLink was similarly promising but so underused that Sony eventually removed the iLink port from the system altogether.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

Curse you, LucasArts, for releasing one of the few truly exceptional *Star Wars* games only on Xbox and PC! That's bad enough, but did you *really* have to taunt us with early promises that it would come out on PS2? We thought our relationship was above that sort of thing. No, don't say anything. Just go. We need to be alone.

SONY MONITOR AND KEYBOARD

May 2001: Sony announces its intention to release a network adapter and hard drive in November of 2001, followed by an LCD screen, mouse, and keyboard by the end of that winter. August 2002: Sony releases the Network Adaptor. March 2004: Sony releases the HDD.

This is turning into one *long* freakin' winter.

AOL ON PS2

At the same time the monitor and keyboard were dangled tauntingly in front of our noses, Sony announced a slew of new partnerships to support its online initiative. Among the companies mentioned were online powerhouses Macromedia, Real Networks, and America Online. So far, we've seen exactly squat from any of these partnerships. Most notably absent is any sort of web browser, which we'd love to see even if it *were* AOL.

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

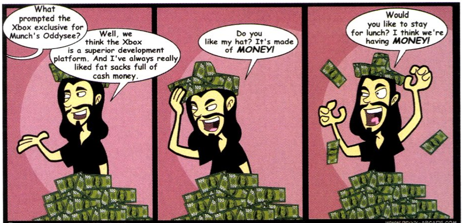
This sequel to the fantastically quirky PS1 puzzle-platformer series was one of the big PS2 stories early on. Then developer Oddworld Inhabitants decided that this newfangled system was just too difficult to develop for and jumped ship to Xbox. Of course, others have speculated on different reasons....

VIDEO ON DEMAND

In early 2002, when we finally got a confirmed release date for the PS2's online program, Sony reiterated its intention to provide video on demand, downloadable music and games, and other broadband wave-of-the-future staples. Sony would not offer a time frame, but promised "sooner rather than later." At the following E3, it showed excellent high-definition video streaming from a PS2 hard drive. And then, nothing. Now that the HDD is out, is it possible we'll see this soon? We can always hope. «

THE SPIRITS WITHIN: THE PS2 VERSION

In June of 2001, producer Jun Aida talked to the press about the ill-fated *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*. What he said: "With the PS2 being DVD compatible, we are working on a very interactive product. Namely, you will be able to render certain sequences of the movie in real time and be your own director and change camera angles and shots. Hopefully, that will go on the PS2 version of the DVD." What we got: the ability to "reedit" the conference room scene by rearranging 12 brief clips. Whee.


What prompted the Xbox exclusive for Munch's Oddysee?
Well, we think the Xbox is a superior development platform. And I've always really liked fat sacks full of cash money.
Do you like my hat? It's made of MONEY!
Would you like to stay for lunch? I think we're having MONEY!

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GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◖	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
8 ⚡ Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◖	78

113.1/151 40

1 Point Remaining

Name: Shock of Frost
Req'd Level: 2
Details: Press R2
Next Level:
28-34 cold damage damage.

1
Spell Book
Choose
Done

LEVEL 20 INSTANTLY

Start a new game, and once you have control of your character, simultaneously press L1, R2, △, and R3. You will be level 20 with 999 skill points to spend.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡ Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◖	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	●●●●●	68
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	Gotham Games	●◖	63
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◖	64
14 Corvette	Global Star	●●●◖	81

ALL COURSES

Enter this code in the Option menu as your name: XOPENSEZ

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Universal	●●●◖	51
Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	●●●●	46
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◖	80
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◖	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◖	49
Dark Cloud	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	46
Dark Cloud 2	Sony CEA	●●●●●	66
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◖	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	●●●◖	50
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◖	39
Dead to Rights	Namco	●●●	65
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	●●●●	67
Defender	Midway	●●●◖	62
⚡ Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◖	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◖	56
Devil May Cry	Capcom	●●●●●	50
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◖	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◖	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◖	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◖	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◖	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	●●●◖	65
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	Atari	●●◖	76
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◖	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
3 Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78

LEVEL UP YOUR WEAPONS QUICKLY

In story mode chapter 1, verse 2 on Easy difficulty, equip a weapon with magic that can create an aura around you. Charge the magic meter, cast the Aura spell, quickly press and hold the R2 button and switch to the weapon you want to level up, then run over all the enemies with the aura. Any enemies you kill with it will earn you points toward the weapon you have equipped.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡ Jay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	●●●	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	LucasArts	●●●●●	46
⚡ ESPN College Hoops	Sega Sports	●●●◖	76
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega Sports	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ ESPN NBA Basketball	Sega Sports	●●●●●	75
⚡ ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	73
⚡ ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡ EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡ EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	EA Sports	●●●●●	52
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	EA Sports	●●●●●	71
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	63
⚡ FIFA Soccer 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	75
⚡ Fight Night 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	80
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	Square EA	●●●●●	53
Final Fantasy X-2	Square Enix USA	●●●●●	75
2 ⚡ Final Fantasy XI	Square Enix USA	●●●●●	78

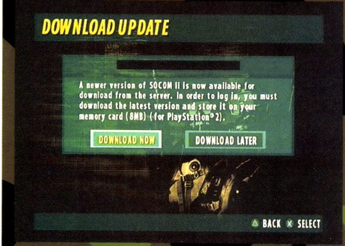
SUPPORT-JOB TIP

At the beginning of the game, you select a job. Once you reach level 18, you have the option to do a quest to receive a support job. Note that your support job can only be half of what your main level is at the time. For example, say you reach level 20 when you opt to tackle this quest—the highest level your support job could be is 10.

SAN D'ORIA REVEALED

Head over to page 114 for the maps of San D'Oria.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Finding Nemo	THQ	●●●◖	71
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67


DOWNLOAD UPDATE

A newer version of SOCOM II is now available for download from the server. In order to log in, you must download the latest version and store it on your memory card (8MB) (for PlayStation®2).

SOCOM 2.1

THE KING OF PS2 ONLINE GAMES GETS PATCHED

If you haven't played *SOCOM II* online in a while, you may be surprised to learn that in spite of all the best efforts of Sony and Zipper, cheating has happened. Some determined players have managed to find enough glitches, exploits, and other programming oddities to make the playing experience seriously frustrating for the rest of us honest players.

On the other hand, if it's *because* of all those **damn dirty cheaters, glitchers, and exploiters** that you haven't played *SOCOM II* in a while, you'll be pleased to learn that Zipper has done something about it. In early March, players logging on to the *SOCOM* servers were greeted with a message prompting them to download a patch to their memory cards. This patch, which downloads in about a minute and modifies the *SOCOM II* save on your memory card (or creates a new one), addresses loads of fun-wrecking glitches, among them:

- It's no longer possible for damn dirty cheaters to remove turret guns from their stands.
- Any holes that allowed damn dirty cheaters to climb *into* the scenery and attack enemies from "outside" the level have been plugged.
- Terrorists can no longer cheat by carrying double the allotment of PMN mines, like damn dirty cheaters.
- Jumping against a wall no longer provides a speed boost to damn dirty cheaters.

On a slightly less important note, it's also no longer possible for antisocial losers to block other players from typing text messages in the briefing room, and the codes that allowed players to change the color of their chat text or player name have been disabled. On top of those fixes, **the M60E3 is no longer unrealistically accurate when the shooter is moving,** and breaching walls now gives the player one point instead of two.

Players have reported lots of other changes—most of them completely imaginary. We did notice that it now seems much easier to jump over obstacles from close up, but just about everything else you might hear about is wishful thinking or faulty observation. Specifically, anyone who tells you that any gun other than the M60E3 has been altered is smoking something; Sony has specifically stated, "No other weapons have been changed."

Now, if it can just do something about that damned lag.... «

RAINBOW SIX 3

YOU'LL NEED ALL YOUR STEALTH SKILLS FOR THE PENTHOUSE

Leave your compadres back at central command and try infiltrating this classic *Rainbow Six 3* mission by your lonesome. There will be some some stealth-based tactics to try first, followed by a phone-jack jacking and a computer infiltration—once the penthouse of arch-loon Vargas has been secured. Your extraction target is an accountant.

OBJECTIVE: BUG TELEPHONE

The mission begins inside a dark stairwell. A tango guards the top of the stairs—**as long as you remain quiet, he won't spot you.** Approach the closed door on the right—this leads into Vargas' penthouse. Both the telephone and computer are on the second floor, so you need to get past Vargas' bodyguards on the first floor before completing your objectives.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The guard patrolling the second floor makes a full circuit, always moving in the same direction. Stay behind him at all times—that way, he won't show up behind you, and you'll know exactly where he is at all times.

Follow the hallway to your objective location (white dot on map). Watch for the decorative screen on the left side—the telephone is on the other side on a table near the couch. Approach the phone and place the bug to complete your first objective.

If planting the telephone bug took longer than expected, hold back behind the screen and wait for the patrolling guard to make another lap. He won't be able to see you here. Wait until he passes, then follow him at a safe distance.

Step lightly into the next hallway toward the glass doors. **Each step you take produces sound, potentially alerting nearby tangos, so tread softly.**

Follow the hallway to the right, leaning to peek around the corners. Just ahead, you spot the first tango—he's gazing out the window next to a large television. Drop to a crouch and slowly move along the left wall into the next room. If you move quietly, the tango won't turn around. The stairs leading to the second floor can be spotted as you round the corner.

Zoom in and peek through the steps to spot two tangos in the kitchen area atop the first set of steps. Their backs are turned, but any quick movements while passing will alert them to your presence. Silently pass them by, ascending both sets of steps up to the second floor. However, if you made too much noise in the first hallway, you may spot a guard walking down the stairs to investigate. If this happens, restart the level; it's easier than avoiding this guy.

Pause at the top of the staircase. Pay close attention to your map. Watch for a red dot on the map's right side—this indicates a guard in the hall ahead. Hold your position at the top of the steps until the patrolling guard moves to the map's top-right corner and disappears. This means the guard has moved down the hall, away from the staircase. This is your window of opportunity. **Stay crouched** and enter the hallway. Watch your map to keep track of the guard's movement.

OBJECTIVE: HACK COMPUTER

After you plant the bug, turn around and return to the hallway. You have to get to Vargas' office on the opposite side of the floor. **Begin by moving down the hall ahead—don't go back the way you came.** As soon as the guard is out of sight, cross the hallways until you spot the office door on the right. Make your way past the office quietly, but don't move too slowly. **The guards inside turn toward the hallway from time to time.** Take note of the two guards and an accountant in Vargas' office as you receive instructions from Clark to move past the office and access a computer in the bedroom on the third floor.

Another guard patrols the third floor, so you need to stay out of sight as you reach the top of the steps. **Approach the gray wall at the top and turn to the left**—this increases the scanning range of your map. A stationary guard has his back to you in the hallway to the right. Enter the hall to the left—the bedroom door is on the left wall.

Gently open the bedroom door, sneak behind the guard, and **duck behind the decorative screen on the right side of the room.** Hack the computer to complete your objective. Your efforts reveal that the accountant downstairs is marked for execution. Clark wants you to rescue him before Vargas' guards carry out their orders.

OBJECTIVE: ESCORT ACCOUNTANT TO EXTRACTION

Clark realizes you'll need to take out some bad guys to rescue the accountant and authorizes you to go Weapons Free. **Wait for the patrolling guard from the hallway to rush into the room.** Fire a few rounds into his torso and open fire on the now-alerted nearby guard. Clear the third floor before rescuing the accountant—you don't want enemies sneaking up behind you.

Return to the stairway and make sure reinforcements from the second floor aren't on their way up. As long as you have kept the firefights short, the guards downstairs are probably clueless. **Sidestep down the stairs while aiming down toward the office.** Before rushing in, however, make sure the hallway to the right is clear—you don't want to encounter the patrolling guard yet.

Only one guard is in the office this time, facing the accountant in the corner. Silently take him out and secure the accountant. By now, the rest of the guards in the penthouse are aware of your presence. Drop to a crouch and open fire on the guards as they enter the doorway. **Toss a tear-gas grenade in front of the office door to aid in your efforts.**

Keep in mind that secondary weapons like the SR-2 are less powerful and accurate than the primary weapons you're used to. **For best results, aim for your target's torso.**

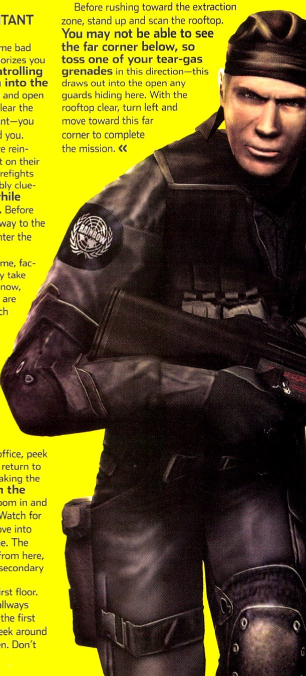
When the guards stop rushing the office, peek out into the hallway for stragglers and return to the stairs leading to the first floor by taking the left hallway. **Stop when you reach the windows along the left wall.** Zoom in and focus your sights on the stairs below. Watch for the two guards from the kitchen to move into your sights. Pick them off one at a time. The guard next to the TV room can be hit from here, too—this is a long-distance shot for a secondary weapon, but it can be done.

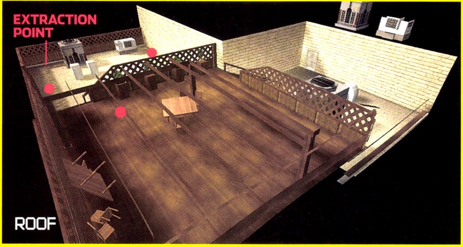
Descend the stairs to return to the first floor. Retrace your steps back through the hallways leading back to the stairwell. Although the first floor should be clear, play it safe and peek around corners before rushing out into the open. Don't worry about being quiet now.

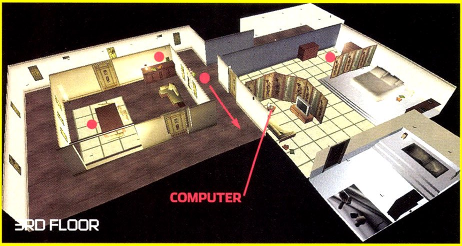
Sidestep up the stairs until you can see the guard. Before he can get a good view of you, shoot him from below. **As you approach the end of the mission, make sure every shot counts. If you're not careful, you may run out of ammo**—a painful way to fail the mission, especially when you're this close.

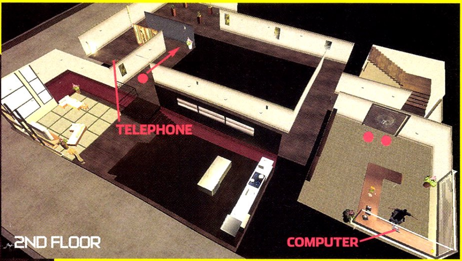
Hold at the doorway at the top of the steps and zoom in on the deck to the right. Wait for guards to move into your sights and pick them off. When it looks clear, approach the steps, and **more guards may be waiting to ambush you from the left clearing.** Once the deck is clear, crouch and move to the steps that lead to the extraction zone.

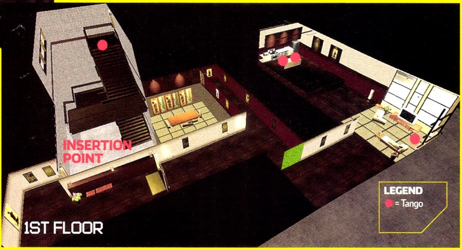
Before rushing toward the extraction zone, stand up and scan the rooftop. **You may not be able to see the far corner below, so toss one of your tear-gas grenades** in this direction—this draws out into the open any guards hiding here. With the rooftop clear, turn left and move toward this far corner to complete the mission. «











PS1 ARCHIVE

Wondering where the PS1 archives are? They are now all housed at the website for Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, www.1UP.com.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
Godai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**63**
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**52**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
Half-Life	**Sierra**	●●●●●	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	●●●	75
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	●●●●●	**67**
» **Hitman 2: Silent Assassin**	**Eidos**	●●●●◖	**63**
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**55**
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
» **Ico**	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**52**
Jak II	Sony CEA	●●●◖	74
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	●●●●	**52**
4 James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79

You can obtain these cheats by earning platinum awards.

CHEAT	CODE
All weapons	○, △, ✕, ✕, ○
Cloak	○, △, ✕, △, □
Double ammo	○, ○, ✕, ○, △

I LOVED HITMAN 2

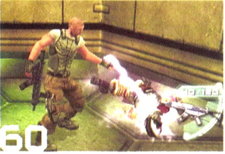
Even now it stands out as a damn fine (and damn hard) action game. If you don't own it, it's cheap now too.

John Davison

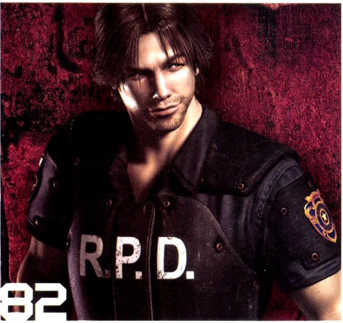
ICO: STILL AWESOME

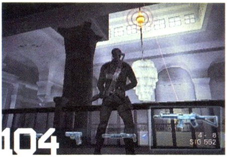
Look, people: If you haven't played Ico yet, do it now. It's every bit as great as when it was released, and it'll satisfy your craving for more Prince of Persia.

Joe Rybicki



TREE BARK
NO PAINT
85%
48





INPUT

19 ALL WE NEED IS LOVE
So send us some sugar. You can find us at opm@ziffdavis.com.

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Want 100 percent? Turn here.

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Bug phones and hack PCs like a pro.

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Producer Rob Hill on being a champion.

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Be better at this year's best baseball gam

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The best and worst of racing games.

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We reminisce about life in the good ol' days—just like your parents do.

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REPLAY

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Double damage	○, △, △, □, ○		
Easier movement in vehicles	○, ✕, ✕, □, △		
Full ammo	○, ○, △, □, □		
Full battery	○, △, △, ✕, ○		
Golden gun	○, △, ✕, ○, △		
Improved battery	○, □, □, ✕, ○		
Platinum gun	○, □, □, ○, ✕		
Slow-motion driving	○, □, △, ✕, △		
Unlimited ammo	○, ✕, □, ✕, ○		
Unlimited battery	○, □, ○, □, △		
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	●●●●◖	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
kill.switch	Namco	●●●●◖	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
The King of Fighters 2000/2001	Bandai	●●◖	76
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	●●●●◖	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	●●●●◖	63
⚡ The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	EA Games	●●●●●	75
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡ Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	60
⚡ Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	72
13 Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79

UNLIMITED AMMO

Just complete the game and start a new one.

BIGGER CAR SELECTION IN FREE RIDE MODE

Once you learn how to break into cars during story mode, they will be made available in free ride mode.

BIGFOOT TRUCK

Come in first place in all of the championship races.

NORRATH'S CHAMPI

ROB HILL OF SOE ON BASHING, LOOTING, AND WINNING

We love +75 armor and morning stars. But we love people who give us these things even more. Producer Rob Hill sat down to give us a more in-depth look into the dungeons and lava fields of *Champions of Norrath.*

OPM This game resembles *Diablo* in many ways—was it a big inspiration for you? What other games did you draw from?

ROB HILL Being huge fans of the action-RPG genre, we were able to look at what many games of that type did in the past and expand on them. *Diablo* and *Diablo II* are two great games in the genre. We were able to look at a lot of the things that made those games fun and adapt them to how we wanted our game to work. We included many original ideas of our own as well, which becomes clear as people play through the game.

Also, I've played pen-and-paper RPGs that were certainly influential in the *Champions* design process. To be honest, you often come up with ideas you don't even remember having a source influence, but they are certainly there. Oh yeah, then there's a little game called *EverQuest*....

OPM What ties does *Champions* have to the *EverQuest* universe?

RH Much of the fiction is based on *EverQuest* lore. You have familiar places like Kelethin or Pit of Ill Omen. Monsters also pop up from *EverQuest* fiction, such as fire beetles, cyclopes, goblins. Even the final boss is straight from *EverQuest*.

We also included the names of the various skills, spells, and items that come from both *EverQuest* for the PC and *EverQuest Online Adventures.* From reactions I've heard so far, fans are really picking up on these touches.

OPM Are any of the rules for *Champions* based on *D&D*, or is it an original system?

RH We generated a completely new combat system for *Champions.* The idea was to incorporate as many elements of *EverQuest* combat as possible and adapt them to an action environment. We also wanted almost infinite growth on all of the statistics that influence combat. Many current game systems have a relatively low cap on these stats. For example, *D&D* attributes cap at about 18. Our attributes let you go to 250 and beyond. This made it so that we could keep dropping items that were at least potentially a little better than the one you already have.

OPM Were there things you wanted to include in *Champions* that had to be pulled, either due to time or technological limitations?

RH We were able to get most of the functionality we wanted into *Champions.* Of course, you always want to add more spells, items, etc. But at some point, you need to be done with it. I think in our case, that point ended up with a ton of content.

There were a few additional fun things that we were considering, such as lava tractor races. But in the end, it was felt that minigames were disruptive to the game flow we were going for.

OPM Were there ever any considerations for having unlimited ammunition? Did you think about having weapons that break?

RH Unlimited ammunition is a topic that comes up quite a bit. We wanted bows to be as potentially effective at damaging opponents as melee weapons, particularly since the ranger class is primarily focused on them. The fact that a character does not have to be close to an opponent in order

INSTANT EXPERT

1. When he was young, he knew he wanted to be a game maker. He says he's paid for it ever since.
2. His favorite genres are role-playing games and first-person shooters.
3. His highest-level *Norrath* character is a level 50 wood elf ranger.
4. He has worked on *Infantry Online, Cosmic Rift,* and episodes, 1, 2, and 3 for *EverQuest* for the PocketPC.
5. His worst job ever was mowing lawns—he has bad allergies.

ON

NEXT MONTH

The team at Snowblind Studios has grand ambitions for the *Champions* franchise: all new playable races, new missions, and some cool surprises too. Next month, get the first look at the sequel, *Champions: Return to Arms*—only in *OPM*. We'll have an exclusive look at all the new features.

to hit with a bow is quite an advantage. The way to balance this, in our minds, was to limit the amount of ammunition a character could carry.

The idea of item degradation was bounced around many times. In the end, we wanted to keep the pace as fast and frantic as possible. Having to repair items tends to require players to constantly monitor and maintain their valuable equipment. In the end, it was decided that this did not fit the rapid-paced gameplay we were striving for.

As for having weapons break completely? I can only imagine the threats I would have received from players who broke a superweapon that took them hours to find.

> **"I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE THREATS I WOULD HAVE RECEIVED FROM PLAYERS WHO BROKE A SUPERWEAPON."**

OPM Why does it seem like you aren't able to buy items as cool as the ones that are dropped?

RH Actually, this isn't always the case. There are several times, particularly when entering a new act, you can discover items in the store that are more powerful than those you had found previously. That being said, it was always intended that players needed to explore and fight to get the truly good stuff, just like in *EverQuest*.

OPM This is the first time Snowblind has included online play with a game. Are you happy with how the experience turned out?

RH Overall, I'm very happy with how the online component turned out. We were able to do much more than we thought at the start of the project. Communication and stability are very robust. The headset functionality in particular ended up working brilliantly. It adds so much replayability to a game that already has a ton of it.

OPM Which character do you think is easiest for new players to learn?

RH The barbarian warrior. It is pretty clear how this character is supposed to be played: smash, smash, and smash some more. It's a good entry point for new players, because it starts with simple combat. Players are introduced to more in-depth combat styles as the warrior progresses.

OPM What's your favorite class to play?

RH My personal favorite is the wood elf ranger. I can do huge amounts of damage at range with my bow skills and switch to close combat quickly. It takes a while to become good with a ranger but ends up being well worth it. Plus, it's just so cool to rapid-fire a bow and watch the enemies drop.

OPM Any unlockable items in the game?

RH We didn't include unlockables in the traditional sense. There are a few things that players will discover if they look hard enough, however. I'll leave that for them to find out. «

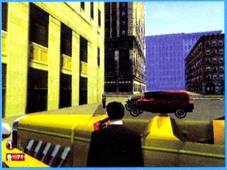
MAFIA

JACKING RIDES

For the finest in early 20th-century perambulators, check out the following plan. Capiche? To accept an errand from Lucas, park outside his garage and walk in. Talk to the mechanic, and he tells you what you need to do. Once you complete the errand, return to Lucas. He shows you how to pick the lock of a fine car and then tells you exactly where you can find said car. Once you steal it, return to Salieri's, and the car is added to your fleet.

LASSITER V16 PHAETON

Mission 6 The first time you visit Lucas, he shows you how to steal the Lassiter V16 Phaeton. The car is parked behind the municipal building. Drive over to the building's lot and approach the vehicle. Look around to make sure nobody's watching, then pick the lock.

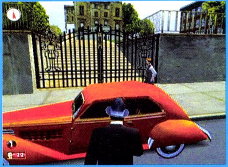


ULVER AIRSTREAM

Mission 9 Lucas tells you to drive to Hoboken and warn his buddy about the cops. Follow the map to the blue X, then use the Action button on the door. Return, and Lucas shows you how to steal an Ulver Airstream in Oakwood. Watch out for the dog near the car.

THOR 810

Mission 10 Listen to Lucas' tale of a violent bouncer—follow the map to the club and beat him up. Lucas then points you to a Thor 810 in swanky Oak Hill. There are guards near the house. When the coast is clear, pick the lock and speed away.



BRUNO SPEEDSTER 851

Mission 15 Lucas needs you to rush and drive a friend to the hospital in New Ark. The friend's health meter slowly clicks down. When you make it in time, Lucas shows you how to lift a Bruno Speedster 851 on Central Island. Pick the lock and drive away.

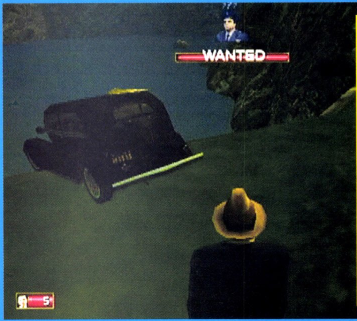
SPOT THEM

The locations of cars that Lucas shows you how to steal appear as blue X's on the map.

GIANCARLO'S SWEET AND SIMPLE MARINARA

1 lb. ground meat
2 tbsp. olive oil
6 cloves garlic, chopped
4-5 cans tomato sauce
1-2 cans of dry wine, red or white
1-2 tbsp. fresh basil, dry
1 tsp. oregano
Ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. fennel seed, crushed
1 tsp. vinegar
Scant tsp. sugar
Dash of Tabasco
Other kinds of chile are optional

In a heavy fry pan, brown meat with olive oil. Add garlic. Fry until garlic begins to frizz a bit. Add tomato sauce, wine, herbs, and rest of ingredients. Let it all simmer down slowly. Stir occasionally so that it doesn't stick. Serves six.



CELESTE MARQUE 500

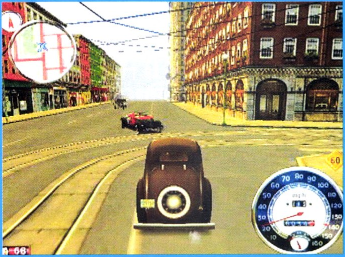
Mission 16 Lucas has a dirty car that he needs destroyed, but he can't do it. Race to the beach, eluding the police, and park the car on the edge of the cliff. Get out, and the car rolls off. Return to Lucas, and he'll tell you where to find the Marque, but don't steal it right way. The car is parked in front of a diner downtown. Wait for the owner to leave the diner and drive home to Oakwood. Once he's inside his house, steal the car from the driveway.

LASSITER V16 APPOLYON

Mission 17 Pick up Lucas' friend in the Works Quarter and drop him off. Lucas tells you the Appolyon is parked in Oak Hill, but a car like this may raise some eyebrows. You need to be fast and have full health, just in case.

TRAUTENBERG MODEL J

Mission 19 Lucas needs you to deliver a package to an associate beneath the East Marshall Bridge. Once you do, he'll tell you that the Model J is leaving Oakwood Junior High. Follow the guy as he circles several blocks. Pull your car in front of his, hop out, and yank the driver out of the car.

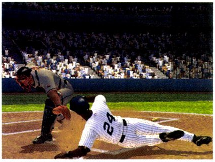


THOR 812 CABRIOLET

Mission 20 Lucas needs you to follow a prostitute to her apartment. Once you do, you'll learn how to steal the Cabriolet, which you'll find in Chinatown. Watch out for the guard dogs in the yard. Open the gate and get back in your car. Drive over the dogs, then steal the car. «

> "THE TENDENCY TO DISMISS *MAFIA* AS A *GTA* CLONE WITH RICKETY CARS IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE BUT MISTAKEN ONE." —THIERRY NGUYEN, *OPM* ISSUE #79

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
Manhunt	Rockstar	●●●◐	76
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**53**
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◐	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	**Capcom**	●●●◐	**54**
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◐	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**58**
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	●●●◐	76
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◐	74
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◐	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	**Konami**	●●●●●	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**39**
⚡Midnight Club II	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**67**
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◐	76
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◐	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◐	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
12 ⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◐	80



D-PAD VS. ANALOG

When lacing up the cleats in *MLB 2005*, don't shy away from using the PS2 controller's left analog stick to control your defensive movement and swing. Compared to the directional pad, the analog stick gives you a better feel for laying bunts down the baselines (stick about halfway left or right), slapping line drives back up the middle (stick just below center in middle), and hitting ground balls to the opposite field (stick away and down). 989 Sports put out a great simulation of MLB action, so you'll need to use a more strategic approach than what you have used in classic swing-away button mashers of the past.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◐	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◐	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◐	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◐	77
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◐	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◐	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	●●●●	64
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◐	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◐	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◐	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◐	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◐	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◐	67
1 ⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◐	80

WORST BASEBALL PLAYER EVER

Create a new character with the name Erik Kiss.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◐	52

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◐	59
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◐	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◐	64
7 MX Unleashed	THQ	●●●	79

Enter these codes in the Cheat menu.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
500cc bikes	BIGDOGS
50cc bikes	SQUIRRELDOG
A.I. bowling	WRECKINGBALL
Career completion	CLAPPEDOUT
Expert A.I.	OBTGOFAST
Freestyle tracks	BUSTBIG
National tracks	ECONATION
Pro physics	SWAPPIN
Supercross tracks	STUPERCROSS
Unlock all vehicles	MINIGAMES

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Namco Museum	**Namco**	●●●◐	**53**
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◐	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◐	62
⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◐	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**53**
⚡NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**63**
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◐	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◐	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◐	75
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◐	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◐	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**68**
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◐	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◐	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◐	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	48
⚡NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**71**
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◐	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◐	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
11 ⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76

SCHOOLIN' THE BIG GUYS

Part of the fun of NCAA games is taking a small school up against the big guys in the NCAA tournament. *NCAA March Madness 2004* gives the player ultimate control, from altering shots in midair to mixing up the dribble when 1-on-1 against an opponent by using Freestyle Control with the right analog stick. But remember this: College basketball games can be won and lost in the paint. If you're a small school, chances are your big guys are going to get pushed around down low by the blue-chip players. When this happens, pass the ball around the perimeter to free up your big guy so he's 1-on-1 on the block. Get the ball to him quickly and immediately drive to the hoop, (pressing R1 for turbo), press △ to activate the pro-hop/power dribble, and press ☐ to dunk the ball or lay it up. Even if you're getting pushed around by a better team on a high difficulty level, this combo combined with the power dribble will tip the scales in your favor, letting you get the ball to the rim and opening up shots on the outside.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**62**
10 ⚡Need for Speed Underground	EA Games	●●●●◐	76

Once you have completed Underground mode, you will receive all accessories, all decals, all rims, all vinyls, all paint colors, and all body parts.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●◐	**52**
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◐	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◐	60

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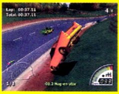
6/8
1/3
-00.0 Serpent
JOEPM
123
MPH

FORGOTTEN GEMS



CELEBRATING THE OVERLOOKED AND UNDERRATED

What do you get when you combine *Twisted Metal* with arcade racing? You get something a lot like *Rumble Racing*, one of the more addictive arcade racers to grace PS2.

Oh sure, it doesn't look like much. Strangely simple environments and Tonka-truck-like cars don't exactly make for what you kids these days would call eye candy. But two big design features make a major difference: First, every track is littered—no, *infested*—with shortcuts. You can't blow your nose without stumbling over a shortcut, and it makes every lap (not to mention every track) an always changing, dynamic experience.

The other big deal is the trick system. With a few simple button presses, you can send your car flipping and rolling in midair. And unlike many of your MXUs and MTXes, *Rumble Racing* actually rewards you for pulling off tricks. Land an easy one, and you'll get a free nitro boost; land a particularly spectacular flippy-flop, and you'll get several nitros. You can just keep on charging them up in anticipation of a rainy (or, to be more precise, *slow*) day.

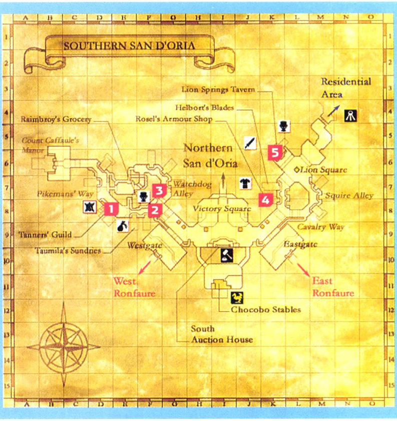
The result: sheer happy madness, the very definition of white-knuckled arcade racing. And it's the kind of racing you can really put some time into, what with finding all the shortcuts and hunting down the (colorfully decorated) Easter eggs to open up new cars.

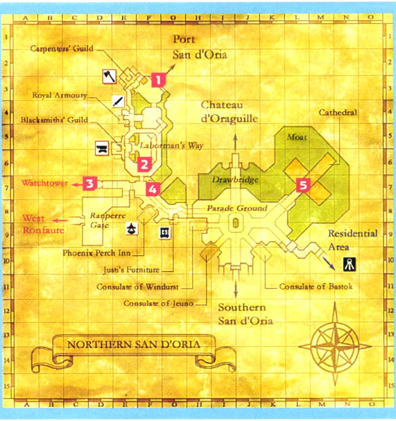
Chances are, you've never heard of this game. But if you're into that whole unrealistic racing thing, you'll wonder where *Rumble Racing*'s been all your life. «

RUMBLE RACING

Pub.	EA Games
Dev.	EA Games
ESRB	Everyone
Release	April 2001
Score	●●●●◐
Cost	$15

FINAL FANT
SAN D'ORIA RE


SOUTHERN SAN D'ORIA
Lion Springs Tavern
Residential Area
Helbort's Blades
Raimbroy's Grocery
Rosel's Armour Shop
Count Caffaule's Manor
Northern San d'Oria
Lion Square
Watchdog Alley
Squire Alley
Pikemans' Way
Victory Square
Cavalry Way
Tanners' Guild
Westgate
Eastgate
Taumila's Sundries
West Ronfaure
East Ronfaure
Chocobo Stables
South Auction House
1
2
3
4
5


Port San d'Oria
Carpenters' Guild
Royal Armoury
Chateau d'Oraguille
Cathedral
Blacksmiths' Guild
Moat
Labourman's Way
Watchtower
Drawbridge
Parade Ground
West Ronfaure
Ranperre Gate
Residential Area
Phoenix Perch Inn
Justi's Furniture
Consulate of Windurst
Consulate of Bastok
Consulate of Jeuno
Southern San d'Oria
NORTHERN SAN D'ORIA
1
2
3
4
5

BETTER THAN BAD, IT'S GOOD!

If you want to make some quick cash, buy yourself a hatchet and head out into East or West Ronfaure. You'll find logging points spread around the maps where you can harvest some woodworking materials. Active logging points rotate on a regular schedule, so you might not always find them in the same places, but you should find at least one close to town. Remember that harvesting tools often break, so bring along more than one hatchet.

QUESTS

SOUTHERN SAN D'ORIA

1 THE MERCHANT'S BIDDING

Parvipon, who is between the sundries shop and the tanners' guild, is looking for rabbit hides. If you trade him three, he'll pay you with 120 gil. Of course, you can sell rabbit hides at auction for something like 100 gil apiece, but this is a simple way to get some quick cash and some easy fame. Rabbit hides are dropped by every rabbity creature in the area surrounding San d'Oria.

2 A SENTRY'S PERIL

Glenne is very worried about her husband, who's out on patrol. Take the bottle of ointment that she gives you and head out to West Ronfaure; Aaveleon will be standing near a signpost around G-7 on your map. He'll give you the empty bottle to take back to Glenne. Give it to her, and she'll give you a sexy bronze subligar in return.

3 A SQUIRE'S TEST

This quest is a little more advanced, but you'll find that the reward is dandy. You'll find Balaziel in the upper levels of the western end of town; you'll need to wander a bit through all the pedestrian bridges to find him. He tells you to bring him a revival tree root from King Ranperre's tomb. If you want to go whole-hog, you can wait for the spook to appear right at King Ranperre's headstone at 20:00 Vana'diel time and try to kill him...or you can buy a root from the auction house for a pretty nominal sum. Either way, the reward is a nice level 9 longsword, the spatha.

4 ROSEL THE ARMORER

Rosel owns the armor shop in town, and he needs a letter delivered to one of the two princes at the Chateau d'Oraguille. Which prince, you ask? It's random, so make a note of it when he tells you. Head up to the chateau (in Northern San d'Oria) and talk to the guard at the gate. Tell him which prince you're looking for, and when you return to Rosel, he'll pay you 200 gil.

5 STARTING A FLAME

Legata, in the Lion Springs Tavern, wants four flints to start a fire. These drop off any wormlike creatures surrounding San d'Oria. Trade them to him and he'll pay you 100 gil.

QUESTS

NORTHERN SAN D'ORIA

1 EXIT THE GAMBLER

Aurege needs to find his deadbeat coworker Varchet. Varchet is hanging out in Lion Square in Southern San d'Oria (around L-6), trying to hoodwink passers-by with his gambling scheme. Talk to Varchet, beat him at his gambling game, and then head back to Aurege. He'll reward you with a map of King Ranperre's tomb.

2 FEAR OF THE DARK

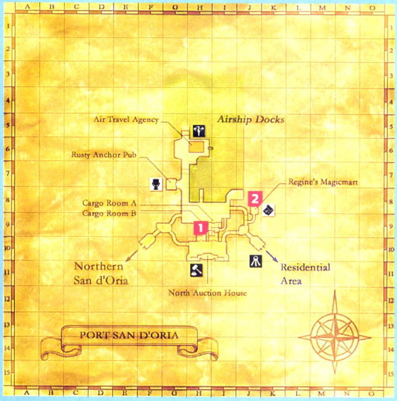
Secodiand will pay a surprising 200 gil for every two bat wings you bring him. Bats can be found in King Ranperre's tomb and after nightfall in most areas surrounding San d'Oria.

3 INTRODUCTION TO TEAMWORK

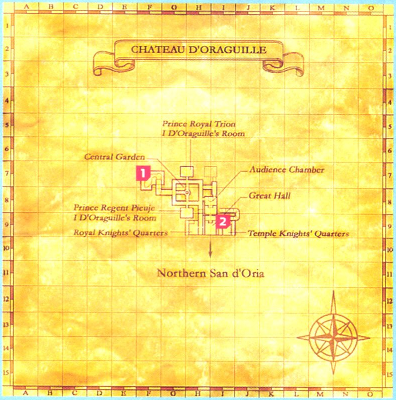
It's time for you to get acquainted with your fellow adventurers. Vilatroire wants you to put together a party of six of your countrymen. Assuming you're from San d'Oria, grab any five adventurers and party up. Head back to Vilatroire and he'll give each of you a shell ring—provided you've all done a few quests in San d'Oria already.

ASY XI
EALED

Another month of *Final Fantasy XI* strategy, another starting town, another selection of maps, and another collection of profitable entry-level quests. This month we feature San d'Oria, home to the haughty elvaan. Happy adventuring!



PORT SAN D'ORIA
Air Travel Agency
Airship Docks
Rusty Anchor Pub
Regine's Magicmart
Cargo Room A
Cargo Room B
1
2
Northern San d'Oria
Residential Area
North Auction House



CHATEAU D'ORAGUILLE
Prince Royal Trion I D'Oraguille's Room
Central Garden
Audience Chamber
Great Hall
Prince Regent Pieuje I D'Oraguille's Room
Royal Knights' Quarters
Temple Knights' Quarters
1
2
Northern San d'Oria

4 GROWING FLOWERS

Kuu Mohzolhi is looking for a particular flower: a marguerite. There are two options: You can try growing one yourself in your mog house, or you can just buy one at auction. In return, you get the ability to exit your mog house into any part of San d'Oria.

5 WATERS OF THE CHEVAL

Miageau is one of the holy men at the San d'Oria Cathedral. He wants you to bring him some water from the Cheval River, which runs through East Ronfaure. First, you'll need something to put it in; talk to the friar to the right of Miageau and he will give you a bottle—in return for a 10 gil "donation." Take the bottle to the bridge in H-5 in East Ronfaure and you'll be able to target the river. Trade the bottle to the river and it will fill up, whereupon you can take it back to Miageau and get your reward of a wing pendant.

QUESTS

PORT SAN D'ORIA

1 THE BRUGAIRE CONSORTIUM

Fontoumant needs someone to run errands for him. He wants you to make deliveries to Regine, who's in the Magicmart; Therrida, who's in the Rusty Anchor Pub; and Apstaule, who's standing near the auction house. Your payment is a luan shield, which is a nice thing to have in the early levels.

2 FLYERS FOR REGINE

Completing this quest is quite a feat, but it's a nice chunk of change for beginning adventurers and a good way to get familiar with the area. Regine is the owner of the Magicmart, and she wants you to distribute flyers for her store throughout the city. Only certain characters will accept them, though:

- In Port San d'Oria: Miene (I-9), Auvare (H-6), Portaure (H-9), Answald (J-10), Prietta (H-9, upstairs)
- In Northern San d'Oria: Guilberdrier (F-3), Coullene (M-6), Boncort (F-8), Capiria (F-6), Villion (F-3, upstairs)
- In Southern San d'Oria: Adaunel (K-9, upstairs), Blendare (J-9), Leuveret (F-8, upstairs), Maugie (L-9), Rosel (K-8)

QUESTS

CHATEAU D'ORAGUILLE

The chateau requires a bit of explanation. As you no doubt noticed in your early adventuring, the chateau guards are very selective about who is allowed to enter the home of San d'Oria's royal family. They will turn you away without a second thought. So how do you get inside to access this quest?

The answer is related to your rank. Assuming that you're a San d'Orian native, you will need to achieve rank 2 before you'll be allowed to enter the chateau. As you may remember from our cover feature a few months back, rank is tied to missions—not quests. So you will need to complete the first round of missions (assigned by the guards stationed near the gates exiting the city) before you'll be allowed to enter the chateau.

That said, once you enter the chateau, there's not a whole lot you'll be able to do until you've achieved several more levels; you can visit Chalvatot at 1 or Curilla at 2, but to complete the quests that they'll give you, you'll need to journey to dangerous, far-flung lands—and even after all that, you won't be able to use your rewards.

In other words, go ahead and check it out, but don't bother getting serious about the chateau until you're at least level 15 or so. «

REPLAY

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
⚡NFL Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	78
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	●●●●	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	**Capcom**	●●●●	**60**
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**54**
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**75**
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil—Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise to Honor	**Sony CEA**	●●●	**78**

As a reward for completing the game, you will unlock Hard mode, *Once Upon a Time in China* and *Fist of Legend* costumes, and Young Kit Yun and Young Michelle's FMVs.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64

SOUND STATION

PlayStation 2
EA SPORTS
MVP BASEBALL 2004

MUSIC FROM THE MVP BASEBALL 2004 SOUNDTRACK

HOODOO GURUS: *MARS NEEDS GUITARS!*

Mars strikes me as a kitschy mess of jangly guitar pop thrown together by people who have spent more time than is necessary finely honing a sense of irony. But then again, I think the same thing about Fountains of Wayne, and I love those dudes, so maybe I ought to cut the Gurus some slack. 20 years since their original release, tunes like "Bittersweet" and "Death-Defying" have that tinge of fresh nostalgia, like they were on the soundtrack to a John Hughes film you forgot you loved. Relive the '80s youth you never knew you had.

●●●◖○

LUCKY BOYS CONFUSION: *COMMITMENT*

I grew up in Southern California, so as a result I have a near-genetic inclination to enjoy American ska: As long as you don't well and truly suck, I'm liable to give you a pass because ska is fun. Well, Lucky Boys Confusion (from Chicago, not SoCal) don't well and truly suck—they dish out the ska in big Midwestern platefuls and make sure you don't leave hungry. Great? No—at times they dip perilously close to Sugar Ray territory, and that's a scary place for any band to be—but it's definitely a lot of fun. And as far as ska goes, that works for me.

●●●◖○

SNOW PATROL: *FINAL STRAW*

Mmmmm. See, I get into the whole Coldplay genre of moody art rock, but every now and then I have to fight back the urge to give those sorts of bands a smack upside the head because, you know, there's a good life out there if you actually look up from your shoes. (Also, Chris Martin: You bagged Gwyneth Paltrow. Cheer the hell up.) Snow Patrol is a band that has the full complement of arty moodiness and yet also seems to be engaged with the world. It's arty music for extroverts: Smart but not shy, mostly upbeat but not brain damaged. Intelligent rock, in other words. I'm looking forward to listening to this again.

●●●○○

STELLASTARR*: *STELLASTARR**

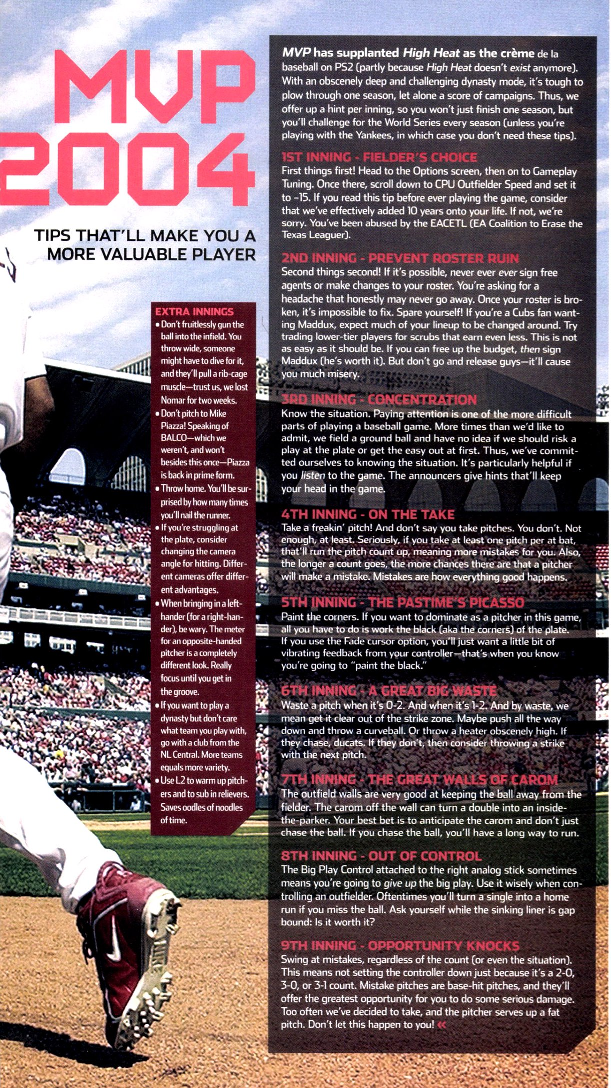
Stellastarr* is the nacho hat of faux-'80s bands, in that it's utterly ridiculous yet strangely appealing. I strongly suspect lead singer Shawn Christensen has a shrine dedicated to Dead or Alive lead singer Pete Burns somewhere in his apartment, while guitarist Michael Jurin has a similar shrine dedicated to Johnny Marr. These are two sounds I wouldn't have suspected would go great together, and truth be told, I don't actually think they do. But at the some time, I'm deeply entertained by Christensen's histrionics and the rest of the band's clean stutter. I figure I'm enjoying the album more than it really deserves.

●●●●○

THE VON BONDIES: *PAWN SHOPPE HEART*

Pawn Shoppe barrels out of the gate with a passel of short, sharp songs that stomp merrily past you on their way to, well, who knows where. But like so many people, animals, and things that burst out like gangbusters, it burns out quickly—at the halfway point of the album you feel like you're coming down from a sugar high, and boy, that comedown is a hard one. It's interesting to hear an album smack to the ground like that. This doesn't mean the second half of the album is bad—it's fine. But after such a roaring start, it's not what it should be.

●●●●○



MVP 2004

TIPS THAT'LL MAKE YOU A MORE VALUABLE PLAYER

MVP **has supplanted** ***High Heat*** **as the crème** de la baseball on PS2 (partly because *High Heat* doesn't *exist* anymore). With an obscenely deep and challenging dynasty mode, it's tough to plow through one season, let alone a score of campaigns. Thus, we offer up a hint per inning, so you won't just finish one season, but you'll challenge for the World Series every season (unless you're playing with the Yankees, in which case you don't need these tips).

1ST INNING - FIELDER'S CHOICE

First things first! Head to the Options screen, then on to Gameplay Tuning. Once there, scroll down to CPU Outfielder Speed and set it to -15. If you read this tip before ever playing the game, consider that we've effectively added 10 years onto your life. If not, we're sorry. You've been abused by the EACETL (EA Coalition to Erase the Texas League).

2ND INNING - PREVENT ROSTER RUIN

Second things second! If it's possible, never ever *ever* sign free agents or make changes to your roster. You're asking for a headache that honestly may never go away. Once your roster is broken, it's impossible to fix. Spare yourself! If you're a Cubs fan wanting Maddux, expect much of your lineup to be changed around. Try trading lower-tier players for scrubs that earn even less. This is not as easy as it should be. If you can free up the budget, *then* sign Maddux (he's worth it). But don't go and release guys—it'll cause you much misery.

3RD INNING - CONCENTRATION

Know the situation. Paying attention is one of the more difficult parts of playing a baseball game. More times than we'd like to admit, we field a ground ball and have no idea if we should risk a play at the plate or get the easy out at first. Thus, we've committed ourselves to knowing the situation. It's particularly helpful if you *listen* to the game. The announcers give hints that'll keep your head in the game.

4TH INNING - ON THE TAKE

Take a freakin' pitch! And don't say you take pitches. You don't. Not enough, at least. Seriously, if you take at least one pitch per at bat, that'll run the pitch count up, meaning more mistakes for you. Also, the longer a count goes, the more chances there are that a pitcher will make a mistake. Mistakes are how everything good happens.

5TH INNING - THE PASTIME'S PICASSO

Paint the corners. If you want to dominate as a pitcher in this game, all you have to do is work the black (aka the corners) of the plate. If you use the Fade cursor option, you'll just want a little bit of vibrating feedback from your controller—that's when you know you're going to "paint the black."

6TH INNING - A GREAT BIG WASTE

Waste a pitch when it's 0-2. And when it's 1-2. And by waste, we mean get it clear out of the strike zone. Maybe push all the way down and throw a curveball. Or throw a heater obscenely high. If they chase, ducats. If they don't, then consider throwing a strike with the next pitch.

7TH INNING - THE GREAT WALLS OF CAROM

The outfield walls are very good at keeping the ball away from the fielder. The carom off the wall can turn a double into an inside-the-parker. Your best bet is to anticipate the carom and don't just chase the ball. If you chase the ball, you'll have a long way to run.

8TH INNING - OUT OF CONTROL

The Big Play Control attached to the right analog stick sometimes means you're going to *give up* the big play. Use it wisely when controlling an outfielder. Oftentimes you'll turn a single into a home run if you miss the ball. Ask yourself while the sinking liner is gap bound: Is it worth it?

9TH INNING - OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Swing at mistakes, regardless of the count (or even the situation). This means not setting the controller down just because it's a 2-0, 3-0, or 3-1 count. Mistake pitches are base-hit pitches, and they'll offer the greatest opportunity for you to do some serious damage. Too often we've decided to take, and the pitcher serves up a fat pitch. Don't let this happen to you! «

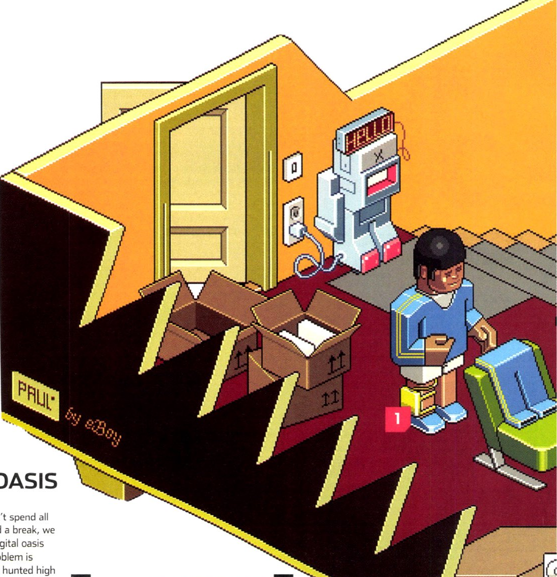
EXTRA INNINGS

- Don't fruitlessly gun the ball into the infield. You throw wide, someone might have to dive for it, and they'll pull a rib-cage muscle—trust us, we lost Nomar for two weeks.
- Don't pitch to Mike Piazza! Speaking of BALCO—which we weren't, and won't besides this once—Piazza is back in prime form.
- Throw home. You'll be surprised by how many times you'll nail the runner.
- If you're struggling at the plate, consider changing the camera angle for hitting. Different cameras offer different advantages.
- When bringing in a left-hander (for a right-hander), be wary. The meter for an opposite-handed pitcher is a completely different look. Really focus until you get in the groove.
- If you want to play a dynasty but don't care what team you play with, go with a club from the NL Central. More teams equals more variety.
- Use L2 to warm up pitchers and to sub in relievers. Saves oodles of noodles of time.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scooby-Doo: Night of 100 Frights	**THQ**	●●●	**58**
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	●●●●◖	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	●●●	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	●●●●◖	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	●●●●●	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**57**
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	●●●●●	**72**
Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	68
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◖	75
SpyHunter	**Midway**	●●●●◖	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**74**
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	●●●	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65

THE GAME PAD

CREATING YOUR DIGITAL OASIS



Summer is coming, and you can't spend all your time outside. So, when you need a break, we figured we'd help you gear up your digital oasis with all the necessary equipment. Problem is money doesn't grow on trees. So, we hunted high and low for good deals and put together a quick look at how your living room could look.

1 STADIUM PAL

$30

www.stadiumpal.com

Why bother getting up and going to the bathroom when you can just slip a catheter in your pants? You heard right, this handy lifesaver will keep your butt firmly planted on the couch longer than you thought humanly possible. Just remember to empty the—ahem—collection bag during the cut-scenes.

2 LOGITECH CORDLESS CONTROLLER

$50 www.logitech.com

3 SAITEK'S WOW ADAPTER

$40 www.saitekusa.com

Cut the cord, kid. If you've got a living room the size of Yankee stadium (or you're a Ritalin-hooked ADD patient) you need a controller that can move with you. The guys here love Logitech's Cordless controller. We're also fans of Saitek's WOW adapter since it turns your favorite controller into a cordless one. The transmitter plugs into the PS2 and you drop the receiver anywhere in the living room you like.

4 LOGITECH USB HEADSET

$30 www.logitech.com

For those that want to play *SOCOM II* or *Karaoke Revolution*, this one is a no-brainer. The bundled headsets are serviceable but tear into your scalp. This pair is comfortable and works well—just remember that the cord connecting your noggin to the PS2 isn't that long, so you'll need to set up camp closer to the set.

5 WALMART VIDEO ROCKER

$30 www.walmart.com

6 WALMART LEATHER ROCKER RECLINER

$690 www.walmart.com

Your living room is your kingdom—and you rule! No better way to celebrate your reign than with the mightiest throne around. This chair has more extras than your car: heated massage, built-in phone, reclining seats, and a fridge that can stash a six-pack of brews. And when you have guests over, you might as well pull the stow-able Video Rockers out so that they don't have to squat on the floor.

7 PELICAN ACCESSORIES SYSTEM SELECTOR PRO

$150 www.pelicanacc.com

We spent a better part of the last Game Pad talking about how useful this switchbox is for living in high definition. It's got more hookups than a *Girls Gone Wild* video and is an ideal way to hook up multiple devices that sport component video and digital optical audio.

8 IKEA BENNO TV BENCH

$100 www.ikea.com

You've gone to all this trouble buying a boatload of electronics, you should be able to stow it in your living room and not have it sitting on cinder blocks. Ikea's furniture looks good, is very functional, and best of all, it's cheap as dirt since you put it together yourself. When looking at any home entertainment center, though, make sure you size up your needs. Figure out how tall all your components are. Nothing's worse than having to strand your PS2 on the floor. Also, any set that has adjustable shelving is a big plus for meeting your needs.

10 SONY EYETOY

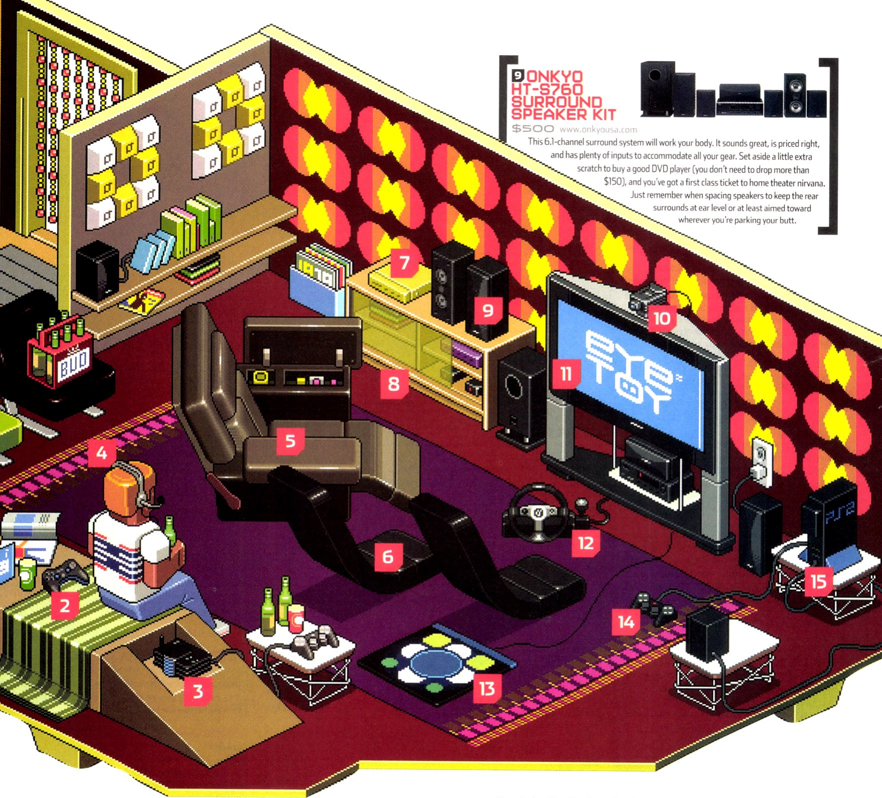
$40 www.playstation.com

We like making hand gestures at the TV and have it accomplish something, but you need to set up the EyeToy right. Ideally, you should park the camera right atop your television. Next, you've got to plan for how you're using it. Stand or sit about six feet away and make sure that the area is well lit. We haven't come across any light source location screw-ups, but try not to have a lamp directly over the camera.

11 SONY'S 34-INCH KV-34XBR910

$2,500 www.sonystyle.com

A good HD-TV set doesn't come cheap. There's a lot bigger (and a lot more expensive) out there, but when it comes to your standard-issue, direct-view televisions you won't find a better one on the market right now—especially when you consider that we've seen this one



9 ONKYO HT-S760 SURROUND SPEAKER KIT

$500 www.onkyousa.com

This 6.1-channel surround system will work your body. It sounds great, is priced right, and has plenty of inputs to accommodate all your gear. Set aside a little extra scratch to buy a good DVD player (you don't need to drop more than $150), and you've got a first class ticket to home theater nirvana. Just remember when spacing speakers to keep the rear surrounds at ear level or at least aimed toward wherever you're parking your butt.

12 LOGITECH DRIVING FORCE PRO

$150 www.logitech.com

Designed specifically for *Gran Turismo 4*, this has a 900-degree turning radius, stick shift, and a tacky rubber wheel that feels awesome. The only thing missing: fuzzy dice. Remember when setting up is that you'll need a table roughly four feet off the ground and allow for a place to put the foot pedals.

priced as low as $2,100. Just remember to allow for about seven feet between you and your television.

13 PELICAN ACCESSORIES WIRELESS DANCE PAD

$30 www.pelicanacc.com

If you're like us, you've been inspired by the sheer artistry of *You Got Served* to play marathon sessions of *Dance Dance Revolution*. Well, my homie, kick off your shoes and use this wireless pad. That's right, one less thing to stumble over besides your two left feet.

14 SONY DUALSHOCK 2

$25 www.playstation.com

Forget all your fancy leather handgrips, turbo-buttons and blow-drying gimmicks; we've yet to find a controller that surpasses the Sony DualShock 2.

If you're looking for the really cheap way to put more room between you and your TV, grab Mad Catz's 7-foot cable extension ($10). Just try not to trip over all the extra wires.

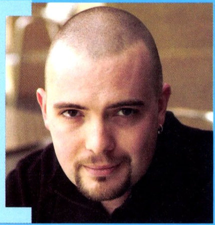
15 SONY PLAYSTATION 2 ONLINE KIT

$179 www.playstation.com

Duh! Why else would you be reading this magazine? The pretty pictures and free coaster every month? Just remember that for all that wacky Internet gaming, you'll need to pay an Internet service provider to hook you up.

HOT DIGGITY DAMN

A NEW LOOK, NEW IDEAS, AND NEXT MONTH...A NEW SYSTEM



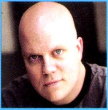
It's E3 time, so you should make sure you check www.1UP.com religiously from May 10 onward for new game announcements, and most important, for hard info on the PSP. We've squeezed as much as we can into this issue, but check back next month for a huge roundup of cool stuff.

Regular readers will no doubt notice that the magazine is a bit different this month. Everything you're used to is still here...we've just juggled things around and expanded stuff that you have told us you want more of (notably reviews, which are now huge!). We hope you like it.

JOHN DAVISON

»THE OPM TRIBE«

DANA JONGEWAARD is excited that another native Iowan, new art director Ryan Vulk, has been hired on the *OPM* staff, mostly because now she will have someone to trade bean walking and detasseling stories with. She has also been pondering one of the great mysteries of the universe: If you eat your own hand, will you gain weight?



JOE RYBICKI wants to formally thank Fox for canceling *Wonderfalls*, launching *The Swan*, and bringing back *Oliver Beene*. He'd also like to give a big shout out to sarcasm. When not writing for *OPM*, Joe plays *SOCOM II*, writes music, and prays fervently for the continued health of *Arrested Development*.

CHRIS BAKER is excited by his new reviews editor position, but his month has had its disturbing moments. Why, for instance, did he dream that a zombified version of Scooter attacked him? At least it was a good excuse to whap Scoot in the head with a crowbar!

THIERRY NGUYEN went to New Orleans to kick it like kung fu and ended up eating an alligator with an abandon most would describe as "reckless" or "shameless." He blames the alligator meat for his sudden transformation from incoherent television personality to illiterate, shambling previews-hunting manbeast.

GIANCARLO VARANINI had to review *Transformers* and *Scooby-Doo* this month, and ever since, it seems like he's been stuck in some sort of weird childhood flashback. That would probably explain why he's been hoarding PS2s to build a PlayStation fort in his cubicle.

BOB CONLON has spent the last five weeks isolated in a hyperbolic chamber, performing an extreme makeover on *OPM*. Making the decision to excise the red bar was a lot like breaking up with a girl. At first you miss her soft, wet kisses, but then you cherish your newfound freedom.

RYAN VULK is dismayed that before setting foot in the door, he had already been dubbed The Incredible Vulk, a nickname that has plagued him since his first day in kindergarten. However, he's already started to make a handsome profit from his "friendly" wagers against Joe in *SOCOM II* matches.

TINA HUYNH is not a writer—not at all. She doesn't enjoy writing. She *does* like e-mail and instant messaging, though. Best let her stick to designing those Replay pages and figuring out creative uses for the color cyan.

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GOOD, BAD AND/OR UGLY

RACING GAMES

If you picked up this issue because *Need for Speed Underground 2* is on the cover, chances are you're a fan of cars and driving real fast. If you want to taste the best the PS2 has to offer, here's our essential list of rubber-burnin', tire-squealin' racers, along with six old wrecks you should avoid.

THE GOOD

GRAN TURISMO 3

SCEA

●●●●●

If you're into cars and don't have this, then you have clearly been living under a rock. Rectify the situation immediately, and then start saving for *GT4*, which will be released...er, eventually. Probably November. Maybe.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

EA

●●●●●

What could be more enjoyable than driving exotic cars at ludicrous speeds through beautiful environments? Try getting away from the cops while you're doing it. One of the best car chase games around.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

EA

●●●●◖

Underground is the ultimate tuner-culture game, and the turning point of the *NFS* franchise. It also boasts some of the best graphics you'll see anywhere on the PS2. Nothing feels this fast. Except maybe the sequel.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Codemasters

●●●●●

Whether you have any interest in the sport or not, rally games provide a certain visceral pleasure as you can sling over-powered family cars sideways along tiny country lanes. It's against the clock, but it's not as dull as it sounds.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE

EA

●●●●●

EA's last *F1* game was so good that no one has tried to do one since. Including EA. This is the definitive simulation of one of the most glamorous sports in the world. It looks awesome and the cars handle exactly as you'd hope them to.

MIDNIGHT CLUB 2

Rockstar

●●●●●

It's rock hard, crazy fast, and has some fantastic online modes. It lacks the licensed cars of *Underground*, but it does a great job of bringing street racing culture to your living room.

NASCAR THUNDER 2004

EA Sports

●●●●●

Zillions of NASCAR fans play this online every day, and the best drivers are so good that they routinely destroy "real" NASCAR drivers when they play against them in tournaments. If you love the sport, buy this one.

PRO RACE DRIVER

Codemasters

●●●●◖

Partly responsible for the ridiculous term "car-PG" *PRD* is a fine example of introducing a "point" to racing games aside from the obvious one of winning. Make you character a champ, and enjoy the handling physics while you're at it.

RIDGE RACER V

Namco

●●●●◖

Infinitely superior to Namco "not a sequel to *Ridge Racer*, definitely not" *R: Racing Evolution*, *RRV* is an oldie but a goodie. Pick it up to feel the dynamics of a classic in the genre. It's very different to stuff like *GT* and *NFS*.

WRC

Bam

●●●●●

The other great rally game, which unfortunately didn't sell well enough for the excellent sequel to be brought over from the UK. Excellent visuals, and possibly the most dynamic handling feel of any racing game ever made.

DON'T BE CONFUSED BY

K1 World Grand Prix

Konami

●●○○○

Not everything with "Grand Prix" in the title is about racing expensive cars in exotic locations. K1, believe it or not, is actually a kick-boxing game.

THE BAD AND/OR UGLY

AUTO MODELLISTA

Capcom

●●◖

Don't let the pretty cell-shaded visuals fool you, *Auto Modellista* is a dog. It'll tease you with its online mode, and then slap you in the face with it's atrocious handling and ridiculous feel.

FORD RACING 2

Gotham

●●◖

If you want to drive a Ford, just go out to your driveway and drive the real thing. Why would you want a game that features Ford's boring line-up? Even the GT and the Mustang concept don't rescue this from mediocrity.

LE MAN 24 HOURS

Infogrames

●●

Here's the thing with a race that lasts for 24 hours...it's only cool as an event in real life. Unfortunately all of the cool racecars in the event fail to seem like they're really moving at 170mph, and they handle like crap.

PARIS DAKAR RALLY

Acclaim

●●

Not quite rally game enough and not quite arcadey enough, *PDR* sits in the mediocre middle ground and fails to engage the senses in any way. Shame, because the real event is pretty exciting.

SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE

Activision

●●

Nice idea, terrible execution. We'd all love to race supercars, on streets, in challenges, and we'd all love to build our own supercars. Sadly, the experience this game provides is dull, and it doesn't look good either.

TOKYO EXTREME RACER ZERO

Crave

●●◖

This franchise *should* be the guiding light for street racing culture on the PS2. Tokyo is, after all, where the whole thing started. Like the other *TER*'s, *Zero* just doesn't have what it takes, and most criminally, it's *boring*.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	●●●●◖	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	●●●	**55**
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	Activision	●●●◖	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	●●●	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	●●●●	62
5 The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80

DIRECTOR COMMENTARY

After completing the game, start a new game and wait for a crow to land next to the three inmates gathered together, then stand on top of the crow.

MONSTER ARCHIVES

When you kill a monster for the first time, its bio will be added to the monster archives.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H3O	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	●●●◖	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Tekken 4	Namco	●●●◖	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**39**
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	**58**
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◖	65
9 ⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	●●●◖	78

Bravo: At Destination.
x2
192 --
B
A

ALL LEVELS

Play as a support troop for the Cubans, then pause the game and press R1, R1, R1, R1, ⊗, ◎, L1 + L2.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	●●	72
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision	●●	76
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
UFC Throwdown	Infogrames	●●●◖	58
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◖	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◖	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◖	52
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◖	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	●●●●●	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	●●●●●	**72**
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◖	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◖	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◖	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	●●◖	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◖	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◖	59
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◖	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◖	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◖	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
15 **World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l**	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**

ALL-STAR TEAMS

Win the Championship LG Cup to get the Premier All-Star team. Dominate the Multi-International Cup for the World All-Star team.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◖	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◖	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◖	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	●●●●●	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◖	68
WWE SmackDown!: Here Comes the Pain	THQ	●●●◖	76
WWE SmackDown!: Shut Your Mouth	THQ	●●◖	64
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	**THQ**	●●●◖	**52**
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●●◖	64
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◖	38
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	●●●●	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◖	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◖	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◖	49
Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◖	67
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◖	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◖	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◖	68

READER REVIEWS

HEROES AND SPIES

SONIC HEROES

What you said: "Sega may not have perfected *Sonic Heroes*, but it's not a bad game. Its easy-to-pick-up gameplay is made easier by the tutorial—you learn to use each character's abilities expertly. Since each is different, it's nice to see what they can do and find out which team is right for you.

The stories interlace with each other, making you play with all four teams to figure out the plot. The homing attack, though, is only reliable at close range, causing unwanted results or even a lost life. Also, levels with grind rails don't automatically place you on the rail, again making you lose a life. These issues aren't that bad because the game is very forgiving with its lives, although checkpoints are often not in the location you'd want. *Sonic Heroes* is just above mediocre."

Your Score: ●●●○○

Tony Esho
Tony21489@sbcglobal.net

What we said: "This game does little to return the series back to what made it so fun to begin with. New characters plus less-than-stellar design equals disappointment."

Our Score: ●●○○○

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

What you said: "People might be hesitant about this game, since it uses a third-person view, but everything's all the more interesting because of this. Not only is stealth incorporated seamlessly into the gameplay, the action is much better. Can you fight four guys, flipping them and smashing them into walls in first-person view? No.

The fact that the actors themselves voiced and modeled for the characters makes it seem like you're in a *Bond* movie. The MI6 interludes add to the movie feeling. An array of gadgets from Q-Branch help you on your missions. My personal favorite is the Q-Spider, an awesome gadget that can be used as a sleeper dart, invisible reconnaissance vehicle, and moving bomb.

The 16 co-op missions have the same story as the single-player mode, but they're played from the point of view of some regular agents. You make your way through the game just like Bond. It's a great addition. The head-to-head is, sadly, not up to the standard set by *GoldenEye*. It features only three arenas, and though addictive, it's not as fun as co-op mode. On the whole, I believe that this is the best *Bond* game since *GoldenEye*."

> **"THIS IS THE BEST *BOND* GAME SINCE *GOLDENEYE*."**

Your Score: ●●●●●

Eliot John Hagen
eman_182@hotmail.com

What we said: "*EON*'s fusion of pure action, cinematic production values, and solid multiplayer all add up to one simple conclusion: This is the best *Bond* game on PS2."

Our Score: ●●●●◖

Umbrella
"We bring good things to life"
R.P.D.
Raccoon Police Department
WELCOME TO RACCOON CITY
POP:

REWIND

PlayStation
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
TEEN
CAPCOM

PlayStation
RAMPAGE 2
UNIVERSAL TOUR
MIDWAY

GOOD, BAD, UGLY
Street Fighter Alpha 3 won Game of the Month, *Rampage 2* was a contender for worst game of the month, and Mark MacDonald gives "gameplay" a whole new definition with his *Resident Evil 3* enactment.

MEMORIES OF A BETTER TIME: JUNE OF 1999

The more things change, the more they stay the same. That's the overriding message presented to us by this five-year-old issue of *OPM*. The vast majority of the games covered in this issue are franchises that we're still covering today—many in this very issue.

SCARILY FAMILIAR

Our cover story subject that fateful summer month was *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*. Little did we know that we'd still be talking about the franchise five years later. (OK, well, yeah, we had a pretty good idea we would.) The undeniable highlight of the feature was Mark MacDonald's "Do It Yourself *Resident Evil 3*" how-to guide. Most memorable was this special scene: "Jill runs and runs from the Tyrant, until she finally realizes what is really causing her to run is her fear of love. She and the Tyrant get married and honeymoon while Raccoon City burns to the ground."

VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE TAKES OFF

Big news in June of 1999 was a bit thin on the ground. We covered an especially lackluster Tokyo Game Show, chronicled the continued shootout between Sony and PS1 emulator designer Bleem!, and touched on one of the first violent-videogame lawsuits. You remember that one, right? The parents of students killed during a Kentucky high school shooting in 1997 tried to sue pretty much the entire entertainment industry for damages. Interestingly, this was their second lawsuit—the first named the shooter's parents, school administrators, teachers, and fellow students as defendants. Er...right.

PREVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Notable write-ups this month included the debuts of *Dino Crisis* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. Wow, who knew, huh? We also looked at *Chocobo Racing, Crash Team Racing, Spyro 2, Medal of Honor*, and *Rainbow Six*.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

1999 was fighterrific, apparently. Game of the Month was *Street Fighter Alpha 3*, with an unbeatable five-disc rating. We also reviewed the Square fighter *Ehrgeiz*, furry fave *Bloody Roar 2*, and *Fighter Maker*.

REVIEW LOWLIGHTS

Rampage 2: Universal Tour and *3Xtreme* tied for worst review of the month, with *Rampage* earning this memorable quote: "A good rule of thumb to follow when updating an old arcade game: Actually update it."

DEMO-LITION

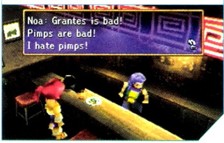
We had a totally kick-ass disc in June of 1999, if we do say so ourselves. Playable demos included the beautiful *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4*, the delightfully quirky *Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus, NFL Blitz, Bust-A-Move 4*, and...um...*Elmo's Letter Adventure*. Yeah, so maybe that last one wasn't so good, but the rest were cool, and by cool we mean totally sweet.

CHART TOPPERS

The execrable *WCW/nWo Thunder* was knocked from the No. 1 spot all the way down to No. 8 by the one-two punch of *Syphon Filter* and *Silent Hill*, both appearing on the chart for the first time. Of course, *Frogger* was still hanging tough at No. 3, because you can't keep a good frog down. Look folks, we don't make the numbers up, we just report 'em. «

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

"Judging from the barkeep's reaction, Foxy Roxy knew she was in the wrong place." —Joel Carleton, via e-mail



Noa: Grantes is bad!
Pimps are bad!
I hate pimps!

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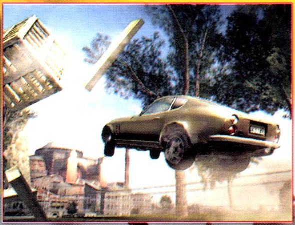

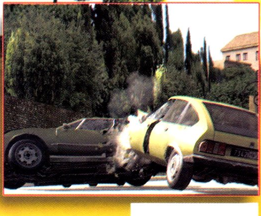

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JEAN RENO AND TAKESHI KANESHIRO
TWO HEROES, ONE DESTINY
500 BC
1100 BC
500 AD
1500 AD
PlayStation 2
NTSC U/C
ONIMUSHA 3
DEMON SIEGE
MATURE 17+
M
ESRB
CAPCOM

THE FINAL BATTLE BEGINS.

Starring international acting sensations, Jean Reno as Jacques Blanc and Takeshi Kaneshiro as Samanosuke, Onimusha 3 Demon Siege is the final chapter in the Onimusha Trilogy. Two heroes from different lands, travel through time and space to defeat the evil Nobunaga and his hordes of darkness. Control the fate of both men as you journey from 16th Century Japan to modern day Paris and back. The final chapter in the Onimusha trilogy begins.

MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation 2

CAPCOM
capcom.com/onimusha

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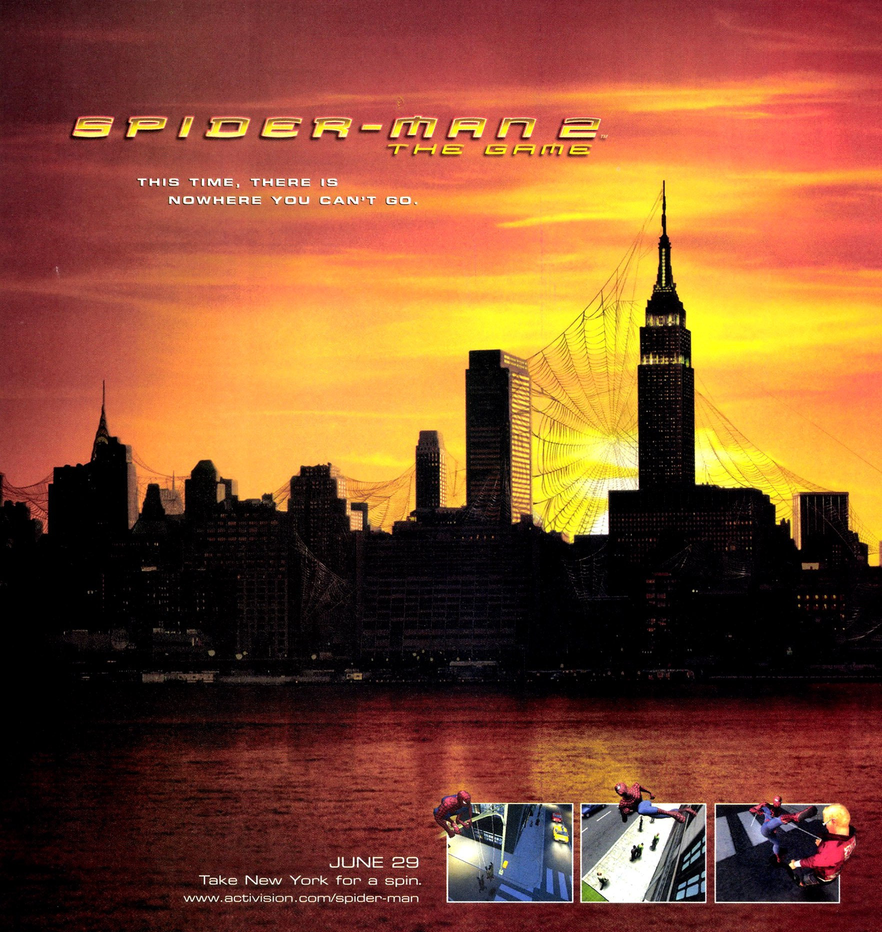

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB Violence

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

MARVEL

SPIDER-MAN

COLUMBIA PICTURES

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ACTIVISION

activision.com

ON THE DVD

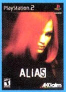
TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Where else do you get playable demos every month? Nowhere, baby—nowhere. But there are plenty of other goodies every month, too. Be sure not to miss the "Inside the Game" features, the valuable memory card downloads, and the Replay strategy videos to help you through the tough times. In your games, that is.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE
Issue 81
BONUS FEATURE
TRACK
GRAN TURISMO 4
VIDEOS
• MLB SLUGFEST 2004
• SHREK 2
• DRIV3R
TRANSFORMERS
ALIAS
PSI-OPS
Disc 81 presented by Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine and PlayStation Underground
PLUS! FRONT MISSION 4 • FUTURE TACTICS: THE UPRISING • NBA SHOOTOUT 2004 • MX UNLEASHED

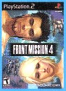
[PLAY IT!]

ALSO PLAY...
The *Transformers* demo shows off the amazing engine, the gorgeous environments, and the believable physics. Don't worry about all that slowdown, by the way—it's much smoother in the final game. Check out the review on page 92 for more.



ALIAS

Get into the TV show with this nicely sized demo featuring the voices and likenesses of the cast of the hit espionage series. The best part: You can fight with swords in a museum. Rock!



FRONT MISSION 4

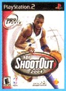
Square Enix's newest tactical RPG is huge—both in terms of the game's length and in terms of the enormous combatants. See how high you can level up your character in these two missions.

FUTURE TACTICS

Admit it: You wouldn't have looked twice at this game if we hadn't provided a level for you—and you would have missed a fun, quirky 3D strategy game reminiscent of *Worms 3D.*

MX UNLEASHED

You get a choice of three tracks in this robust demo: supercross, nationals, and freestyle. Check out the freestyle course to get a feel for what makes *MX Unleashed* different.



NBA SHOOTOUT 2004

Go head-to-head in the NBA for one tantalizing quarter of freakishly tall sports action. Check out the slow-mo camera on the dunks—priceless. Isn't it playoff season or something?

PSI-OPS

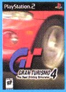
We are so, so sorry for not telling you about this game sooner. To make it up to you, we'd like to present this incredibly kick-ass demo. Check out all the crazy stuff you can do on page 60.

[WATCH IT!]

...AND MORE!
Also featured on the disc: gameplay videos of *Shrek 2* and *MLB Slugfest: Loaded;* Replay hints for *Fatal Frame 2, Castlevania: Lament of Innocence, R: Racing Evolution,* and *Jak II;* and downloads for *True Crime: Streets of L.A.* and *Deer Hunter.*

DRIV3R

This video mixes gameplay and cinematics to show you each of the three cities in the game: Istanbul, Nice, and Miami. You also get a glimpse of some of the true *Driver*-style driving physics.



GRAN TURISMO 4

Do you want to work for the designers of *Gran Turismo?* You will after watching this video. Explore their work space and design philosophy—and check out that sweet, sweet game footage.

ONIMUSHA 3

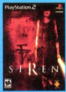
This is, without question, one of the most mind-bogglingly awesome intro cinemas we've *ever* seen. Just try not to weep at the gorgeous graphics and the excellently scripted fight scenes.

ROBOTA

You may have heard of this graphic novel—it's coming in game form to the next generation of consoles, and chances are it'll look an awful lot like this. Tune in next month for more specifics.

SAMURAI WARRIORS

This retelling of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* formula is so good, EA practically begged to publish it in the States. This time the setting isn't Three Kingdoms China—it's feudal Japan!



SIREN

This video offers a really nice insight into the high concept behind this unusual horror game. Pay special attention to the sound in the gameplay segments and the faces in the cinemas.

PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM

Demo Disc Producers
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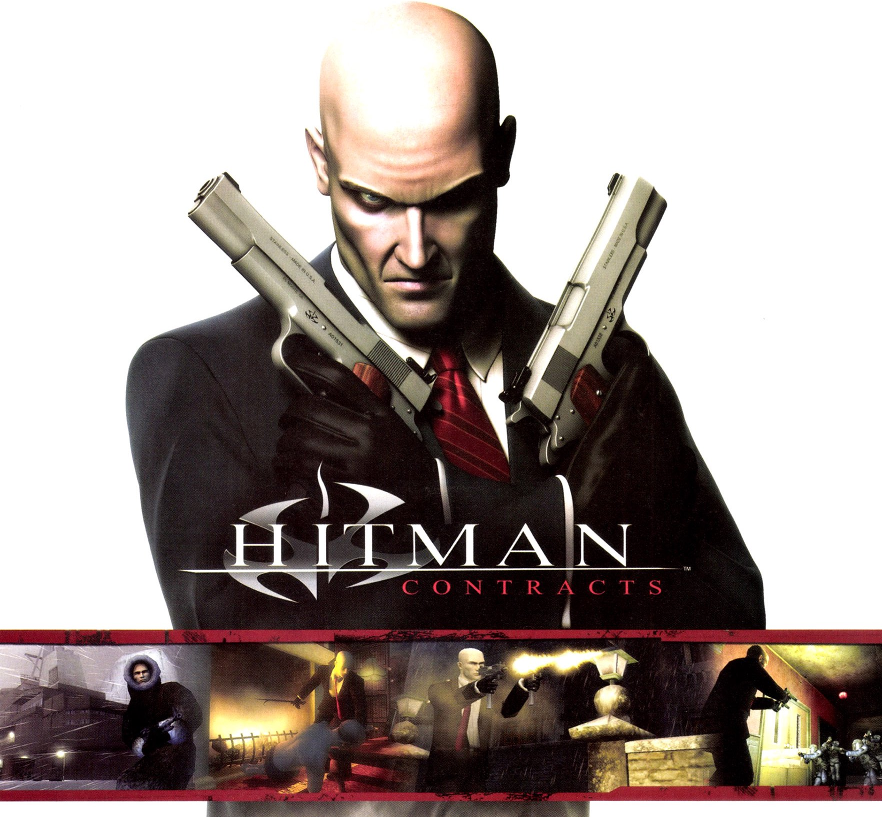

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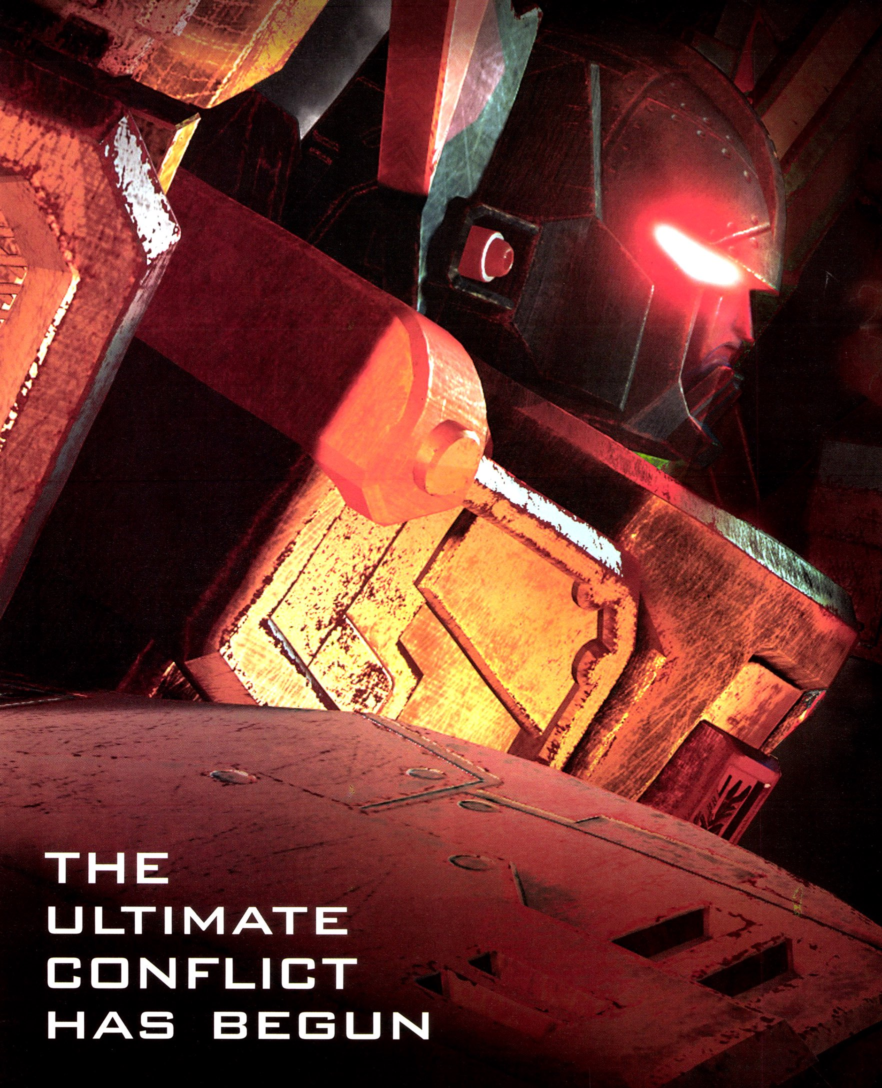
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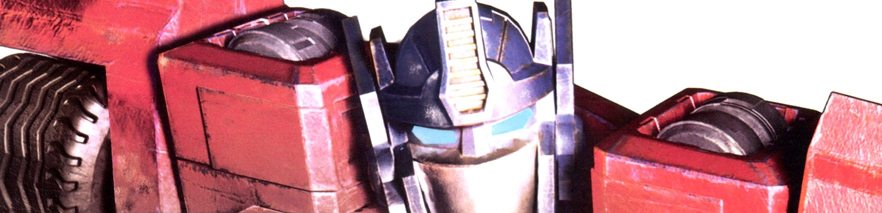

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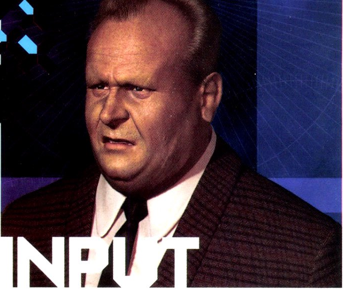

INPUT

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
KILLZONE
POUR HOMME

LETTER OF THE MONTH

As a big fan of the James Bond films, I don't think that portraying Bond as a villain [as EA plans to do in *GoldenEye 2*] is a very good idea. One of the greatest traits about Bond is that he is always able to overcome the greatest obstacles to defeat the most powerful villains in order to save the planet from destruction, all while maintaining his cool and charm. The idea of a game that would portray him as anything less then heroic would betray and alienate his loyal fans.

I do think that the current trend that EA has taken with the series is a good one, but even though they are going to bring back more villains for this game, like Goldfinger and Dr. No, dragging the Bond name and franchise through the mud is not the way to go. It would be like making a game where Indiana Jones becomes a Nazi or Luke Skywalker joins the dark side.

I hope EA has a change of heart and does not go through with this concept for this game. Leave the job of playing a bad guy to *Grand Theft Auto.*

Wade Hertsel
via e-mail

Sounds like EA agrees with you—just check out page 65. And just for the record, Luke *did* turn to the dark side in Dark Horse Comics' *Dark Empire* series. Er...not that we've read it or anything.

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KILLZONE IS KILLER

I was a *Final Fantasy XI* beta tester, so I was hyped when it came out. I was hopelessly addicted to it *until* your May issue arrived. I saw those telltale red goggles and about wet myself. I've been following *Killzone* very closely the past few months, mainly from an artistic viewpoint, but also as a kick-ass game. I've read many previews, but yours is by far the most in-depth.

Michael Kingery
via e-mail

Glad you liked it, Michael. If it wasn't incredibly obvious from last month's feature, *Killzone* is *definitely* one to look forward to come fall. Until then, *FFXI* should keep you plenty busy, though!

MAKE ME THE DIRECTOR

***The Movies* reminds me** of all the times I read you guys talking about how games look or feel like movies. I can't help myself from wondering if any games could have you create a movie by playing through. Say you beat a game (any game) and you unlock a movie of the story line of the game with some of your actual gameplay and some cinematics fused together to create your own movie. Now, this obviously won't work for all games, but I think it would be a perfect addition to such games as *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing.* I mean, how cool would it be to create your own PS2 Bond flick?!

Rob Douglas
Somewhere in New Jersey

Well, there are plenty of games that allow you to watch the cut-scenes together once you've unlocked them. But incorporating your own gameplay into the mix? We like the way you think, Mr. Douglas.

REFERENCES SUPREME!

I just wanted to thank you for recognizing the awesome band Tenacious D. In issue 80 on page 77, the *Second Sight* caption says, "Mind Bullets. That's telekinesis, Kyle." This is a line from "Wonderboy" by Tenacious D. I'd just like to say thank you. They are frickin' awesome.

Kurt Prenger
via e-mail

This is the greatest and best letter in the world.

JASON GIAMBI SUCKS

I was very excited when I received last month's issue because I was contemplating which baseball game to purchase. But when I flipped to page 46, I was deeply sickened by what I read. Scott Steinberg wrote, "Jason Giambi is arguably one of the best major league hitters ever."

Now, I respect what you guys do, and you put out a great magazine, but you can't even argue that Giambi is one of the best hitters ever. He isn't even the best hitter on his current team, being surrounded by A-Rod and Derek Jeter. It is a sin to even compare Giambi to guys like Ted Williams, Pete Rose, and Stan Musial. Next time, please stick to writing

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARD

Our monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at playstationmagazine.com.

DEATH, JR. REVEALED!

As you'll see on page 50, Sony has revealed its first PSP game, *Death, Jr.* **LoneSage** was the first to comment on it on the message board. "To me, it looks like a high-res PS1 game," he says. "I bet the game will blow, though."

"That game may blow," adds **TrintySon**, "but for a handheld, those graphics are AMAZING. Think of when the great companies start working on PSP games."

"I BET [*DEATH, JR.*] WILL BLOW."

"Man, that game looks like sh!t," writes **xtremeskater3**. "It reminds me of *Jersey Devil* or something...."

Apocalypse_Cow has lots to say: "Needless to say, it blows the N-Gage out of the water (then again, so does a blind monkey with one arm), and graphically, it makes the GBA look like crap. I like *Death, Jr.* He's cool-looking. He's also got a rocket launcher and a giant scythe, so he will probably kick a lot of ass. I think he may be the potential 'mascot character' of the PSP."

WINNING ELEVEN 7 VS. FIFA 2004

So, what's the best soccer game? "Based on the whole game of *FIFA 2004* and the demo of *Winning Eleven 7*, I'd have to say that *FIFA* is superior," surmises **MidnightWolf367**. "*WE7* has crappy graphics, and the control system is just off. Would someone with both full versions please shed more light on this?"

"I'm gonna have to push for *FIFA* just for the fact that it has online and more teams," sheds **Arkinum**. "I also like the gameplay a bit more."

"Both are good...but *WE7* is the BEST soccer game out there," proclaims **ohJTBehaaave**. "Now, I'm talking TRUE soccer sim here...where you need to work like mad for scoring attempts and most games end up being 1-0 or 2-1 type games. *FIFA*'s online play gives it a huge edge because it's the only soccer game online, but for flat-out soccer gameplay with incredibly smart/savvy A.I., *WE7* has no equal."

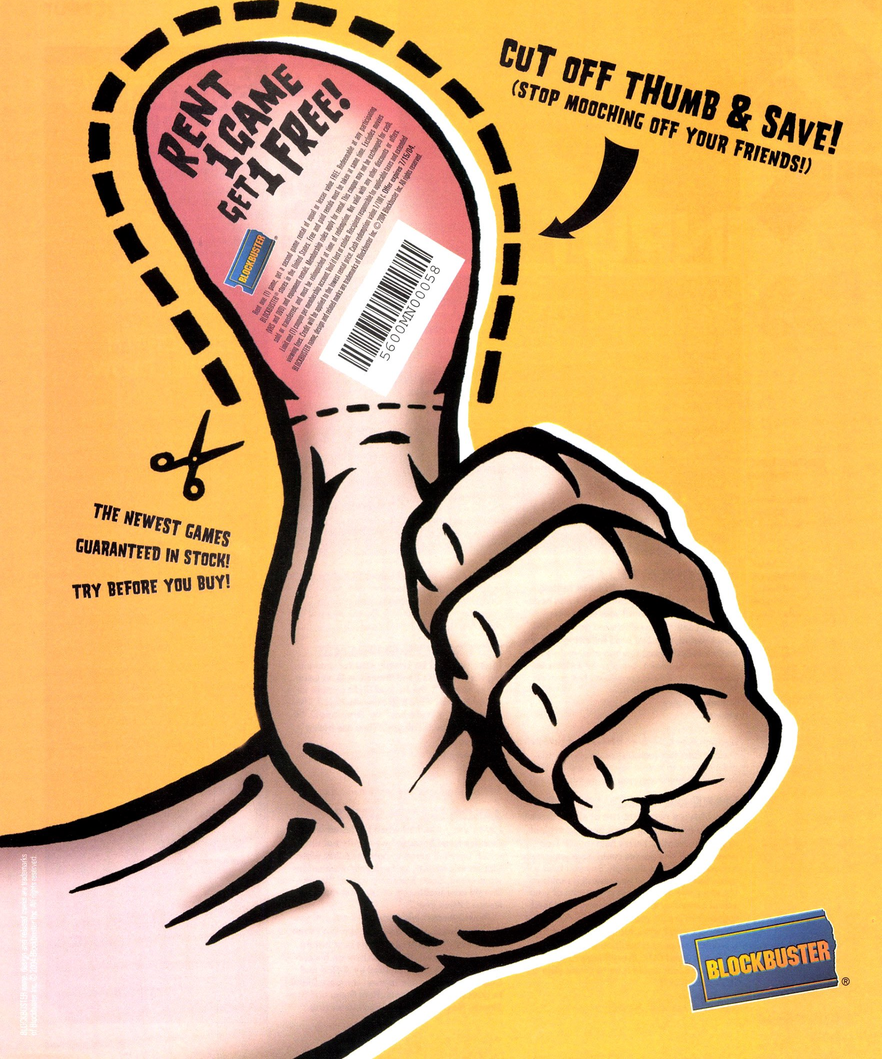
UP YOUR WHAT?

Word of the subtitle to the next *Ratchet & Clank, Up Your Arsenal,* has inspired quite a reaction from **pinball006**: "Doesn't anyone remember a PS1 game called *Tiny Tank: Up Your Arsenal?*," he asks. "Like, c'mon—keep your names original."

"I remember that one," says **chronocrash**. "That game kinda sucked."

"Now, let's all think about this," offers **DashMage**. "What does it matter? It's the friggin' title, not the same gameplay and story of another game."

For the record, pinball006 is completely right. However, it's our guess that since Sony owns the trademark to a pretty amusing subtitle, it wants to use it for a game that people will actually play.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about the game and not about the sport.

And by the way, you should have asked him why steroids aren't a part of *ESPN Major League Baseball*.

Rich Ryan
Hopewell, NJ

Well...at least Scott said "arguably." And you actually can make the argument that it's, er, arguable—at least ESPN's Jon Miller seems to think so. "The statistics guys will say that probably in the past four or five years, the only guy statistically better than Jason Giambi is Barry Bonds," he told us when we interviewed him. We're with you on the steroids comment, though. Silly us.

HOORAY FOR DELAYS!

After reading your current issue, I finally snapped. You guys suck for continually downplaying or flat-out glorifying delays. They happen so often that they're a serious problem now, and to me they at least affect the credibility of publishers who make a date then break their own word.

Case in point: *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time*. Only the first few copies were buggy and not later ones. As far as the director's cut goes, that only came during the current delay. It could have been out months sooner and still have that extra material, and this content has nothing to do with the year the game was delayed already up to that point.

Then I have to comment on *Final Fantasy XI*—delayed for two years for no logical reason at all. And your score makes SCEA feel all the more justified in doing that, I'm sure.

The list of delayed games goes on, but I don't want to type all day. Are they worth waiting out delays for? Hell no!

When a delayed game comes out, how about saying, "It's about f***ing time, you slow turtles," or "Gee, thanks for making us wait for a bad port" once in a while? Or are you still sitting around waiting for *Duke Nukem* to get released so you can hype the hell out of that as a great game?

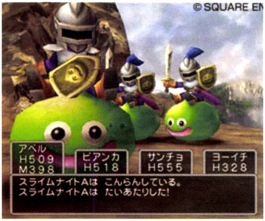
Roy Estes
via e-mail

Get real, dude. To say we "glorify" delays is absolutely ridiculous. Late games annoy us, too, but they're so common these days, you really just have to sit back and laugh—like you would upon hearing that Guns N' Roses is finally releasing *Chinese Democracy* this year.

Besides, we've given games like the new *Star Ocean* plenty of friendly jabs for being so late. For months, our Coming Soon list summarized the game as "Delayed till the end of time." The very issue you cite says, "August? We won't believe it *Till* we see it."

And does a game being late really mean it's any less good? Quite the contrary, actually.

Please, stop being a moron. Go be mad at world hunger or something worthwhile.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スライムナイトAは　たいあたりした!

I LIKE QUESTING FOR DRAGONS, DAMMIT!

As you probably know, *Dragon Quest V* for PS2 is now available in Japan. Now, I sure would like to play that game, as it has never been released locally. I know that you can't do anything directly, but posting in your mag the e-mail address of Square Enix (support @square-enix-usa.com) would more than help. Please ask fans to e-mail and ask them to release it here in North America.

I sure remember the good old days when I was playing *Dragon Warrior I-IV* for my NES. Now the series is becoming much more interesting as far as graphics are concerned, and I think it would be a shame if the game is not released here.

Tommy Levac
via e-mail

We don't need to ask folks to send those e-mails into Squenix—you just did it perfectly well yourself. And we're behind you 100 percent.

GOING UNDERGROUND

HOW THE DEMO DISC HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL IS BEYOND GOOD

You guys are the best! After playing the demo of *Beyond Good & Evil* [on Disc 78], I rushed out and bought the game. I usually only play RPGs and was skeptical about a new genre for me, but *BG&E* is one of the best games I've ever played!

Angela Seaton
via e-mail

I'VE GOT MY EYE ON EYETOY

I first thought that [Disc 80's] EyeToy tech demos were just a scheme to get people to rush out an pick up an EyeToy—and they probably are. But WOW, what a scheme! That "Magic Spells" demo was enough to make me start saving up for that little camera of joy.

Brendan Fox
via e-mail

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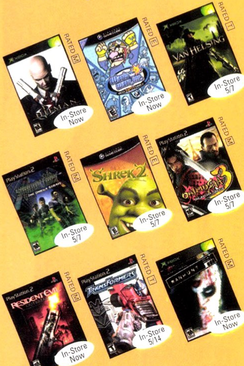

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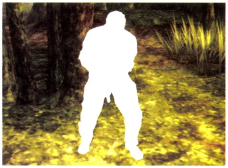
WHY CUT OFF LIFELINE?

It's quite likely that at least one time in every issue of *OPM*, somebody complains about how every new game now is a sequel or a remake or a rip-off of another game, and that none of them are very innovative. However, as soon as a new game like *Lifeline* comes out, you are overcritical and harsh.

Sure, *Lifeline* has some minor problems, but how many other games can you come up with like it? It's a completely new concept! You complain that the new innovative games don't sell enough copies to make it worth the risk for major companies. But then you give this game a 2.5? I don't know about you, but a rating like that doesn't exactly make me want to jump up out of my seat and buy the game and headset!

Ben Parker
via e-mail

It shouldn't. We totally agree that new ideas and franchises are completely welcome, but when the one gimmick your game relies on (in this case, voice recognition) fails to work, how can we possibly rate it highly? It simply isn't worth buying, and our review reflects that. Want an innovative game that does use the headset and actually works well? Try Konami's own *Karaoke Revolution*.

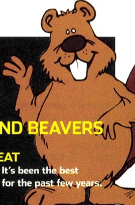


SNAKE BEATER

Was anybody paying attention to the shape of the white silhouette of Snake's body in last month's issue? Hilarious picture!

shweaty
via e-mail

Coincidentally, it was on page 69, too.



ASK US ANYTHING!

LET'S TALK BASEBALL...AND BEAVERS

BYE-BYE, HIGH HEAT

Q. Where's *High Heat*?! It's been the best baseball game out there for the past few years.

Matthew Lohnes
via e-mail

A. Sorry, Matt, but it looks like you're never going to see *High Heat* on PS2 again. Microsoft bought the rights to it after 3DO folded, and the series should return next year on Xbox—by which time we expect *MVP* to be every bit as good...probably better.

I WANT PS2 ON MY PC MONITOR

Q. I want to connect my PS2 to my computer monitor. Is it possible? I just want to play my games on a clear resolution screen (I don't have HDTV). And what about the sound system?

Wat Path
via e-mail

A. RTV's Visual Entertainment Generator can turn your monitor into what basically amounts to a regular TV for cable, games, etc. You do need an external sound system, though, and the resolution isn't great enough to make it worthwhile at its current price (the best we can find is $89.99 at tigerdirect.com). Consider just buying a small television.

STUPID QUESTION OF THE MONTH

My friend told me that Sony bought the technology used to create the PSP from Nintendo. I would like to not believe him...BUT I MUST KNOW THE TRUTH!

Steve Marley
via e-mail

Do we even have to answer this? Back in the day, the PlayStation was originally supposed to be a CD-ROM add-on for the Super NES...but that's the closest we can surmise to anything resembling truth from your friend.

BEAVERS

Q. What is the reason for hardly any games starring beavers? Raccoons got *Sly Cooper* and squirrels got *Conker's Bad Fur Day*. I'm just angry and confused as to why there are no BEAVER games.

WBoroncz
via e-mail

A. Good question. The closest thing on the horizon would probably be *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude*.

REVENGE OF THE ANIME GEEKS

AND WE MEAN "GEEKS" IN THE NICEST WAY...REALLY

Last month's death-to-anime e-mail from Wilder K. Wight inspired quite a bit of response. The overwhelming vibe from readers was "no, *you* suck," but every once in a while, a letter of sympathy or all-out agreement actually did present itself.

Mr. Wight says, "There are a lot of younger gamers who think anime is the next cool thing." Anime isn't the next cool thing—it's the *current* cool thing. Sounds shallow, but it's the truth.

Bret Johansson
via e-mail

Wilder says he used to enjoy anime back in the 1980s, but that it suddenly started being manufactured for an American audience. Hmm...I watch plenty of anime, and none of what I watch has an American audience in mind. I just want to know what kind of anime he has seen that has driven him to that conclusion. He sounds like one of those people who say stupid things like, "All anime looks like *Sailor Moon*."

Danny
via e-mail

Apparently, Mr. Wight doesn't realize exactly what anime is and why it has such a wide influence. Anime is a staple of mainstream Japanese culture, just like music and movies in the U.S. If you want to get right down to it, anime has its roots as an ancient Japanese art that was used to tell stories and preserve history. So to quote Mr. Wight, there's no "getting over anime."

David Smith (*not* 1UP.com's Dave Smith)
via e-mail

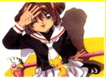
I have to agree with Wilder K. Wight. I have been living in Japan for almost two years, and even the Japanese don't go overboard with their affection for the art in the same way Americans do. More Japanese people are enamored with Disney products than they are with *Gundam*, *Lupin*, or any other long-standing series that many Americans are becoming familiar with.

I hate to shatter the pathetic, lonely worlds of many fanboys back in the States, but anime is as dead as Osamu Tezuka himself.

Gregory J. Clements, SSgt, USAF
Misawa Air Base, Japan

Wight can go suck on an egg and f*** off.

Steve Monterosso
via e-mail



WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Thanks to everyone who wrote in to tell us the girl we randomly found on the Internet (via a Google image search for "anime") is Sakura from *Cardcaptors*, a show that ran on Kids WB! for a while. The thing on her lap is Keroberos. He's very happy.

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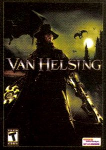

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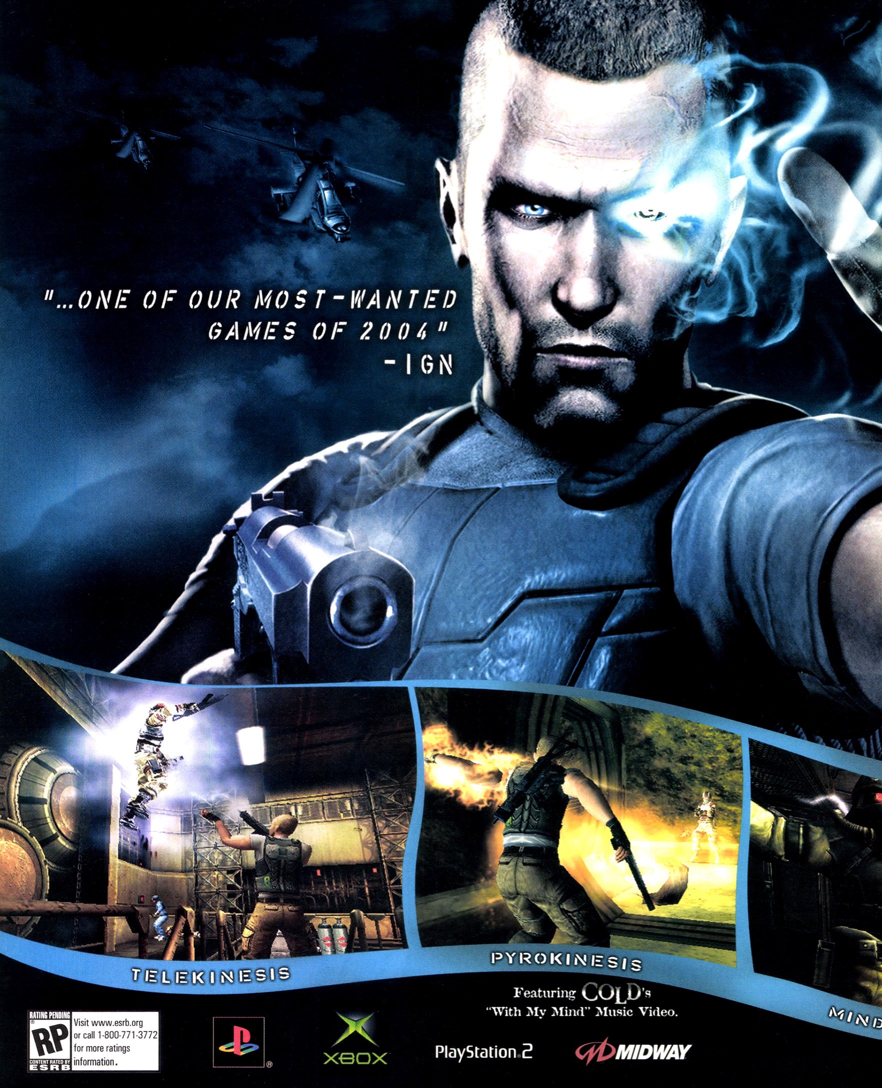
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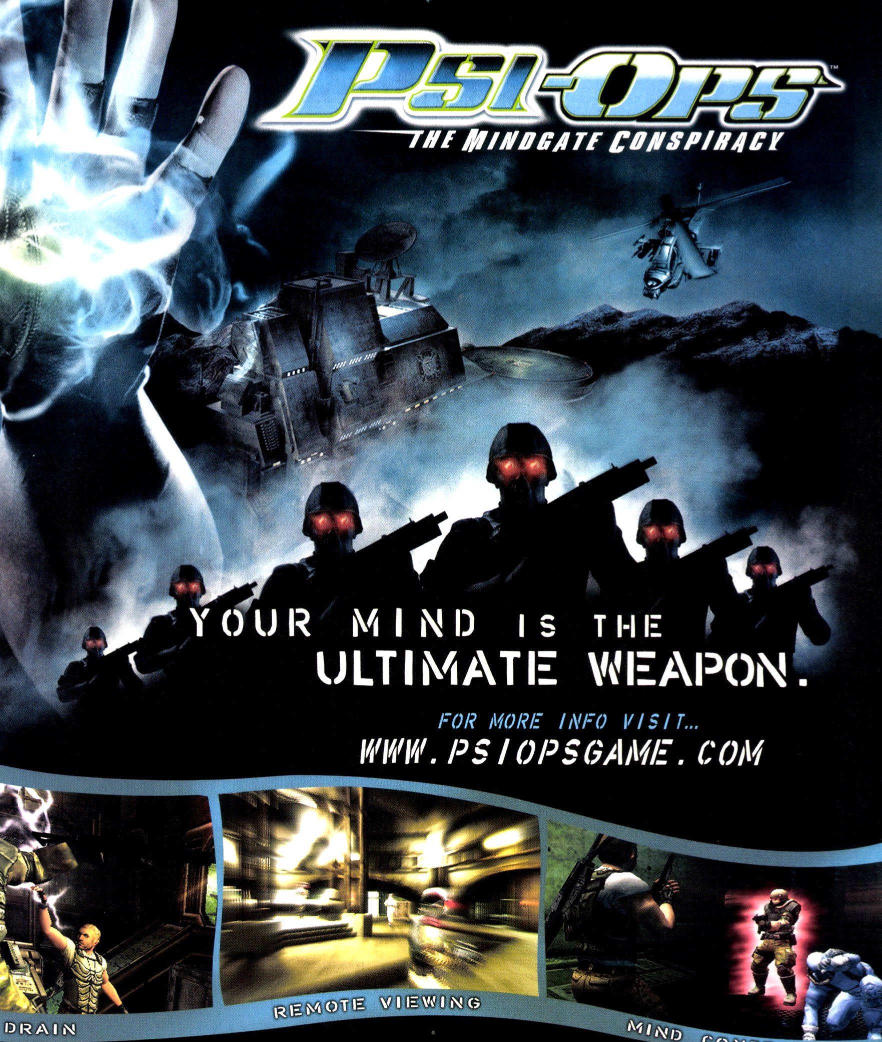
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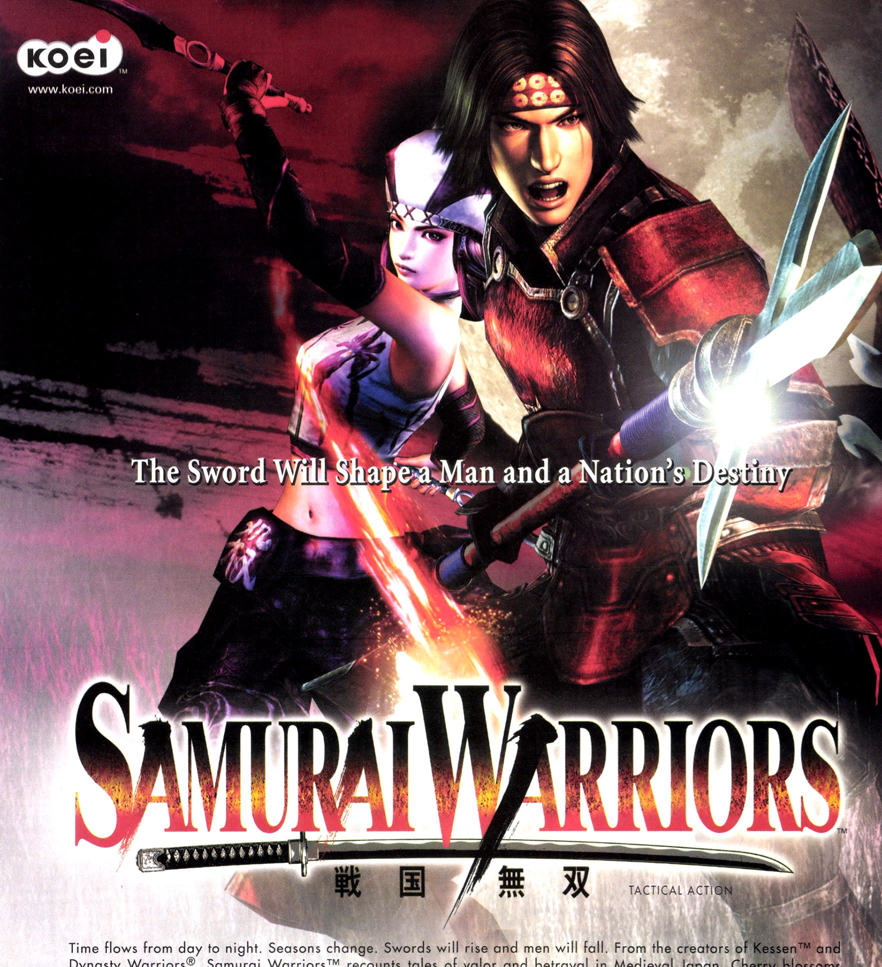
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PlayStation 2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Suggestive Themes
Violence

HYPE

HYPED THIS MONTH

30 **JAK & RATCHET 3** It's sequel time again! Surprised? No, we weren't either.

32 **WAR GAMES** 15 games about...you guessed it! War! Including Battlefield Modern Combat, Ghost Recon 2, Killzone, and 12 others.

41 **GRAN TURISMO 4** It's got cool-looking cars in it.

44 **ENTHUSIA** Get excited about more cars! Yay!

46 **THE WHOLE TEN YARDS** See what's in this year's Madden.

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68 **AREA 51** Your HazMat instruction manual.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

IT'S LIKE A PLAYSTATION 3 GAME, ONLY NOT

»It may be a bit premature to get all excited about Sony's new hardware, but that's not stopping Digital Eclipse from releasing the first footage of its PlayStation 3 project *Dark Sector*. The incredibly brief trailer, which can be viewed on www.1UP.com, depicts a character equipped with a special suit—not unlike the cyber-ninja costume from the *Metal Gear Solid* series—stalking a group of heavily armored soldiers against the backdrop of a futuristic space station or ship.

While the action in the trailer itself isn't all that spectacular, the fact that it's running in real time gives valuable insight into the level of detail and type of special effects we can expect from the new hardware—this is especially evident by some of the great lighting effects that are present throughout the demo. There's even a nifty morphing effect that enables the main character's helmet to wrap smoothly around his head as he prepares for battle.

Actually, it's those special effects that are changing the way games are designed visually. High-end PC games such as *Doom 3* and *Half-Life 2* use advanced texturing methods and a variety of other sneaky visual tricks that cut down on the number of polygons required for both environments and character models without sacrificing any detail. In fact, games using these techniques tend to look much better than their contemporary counterparts.

All this begs an important question—is the demo we saw actually running on PlayStation 3 hardware? The short answer is no. PS3 development kits and even emulation are a ways off—heck, even IBM says it plans to reveal the first details on the inner working of the cell architecture over the next few months. Publishers and developers have been briefed on the basic technical specs of the hardware over the past several months, and it's entirely possible that Digital Eclipse built the game with some basic PS3 portability in mind. However, the engine is likely from the PC version of the game.

Either way, if *Dark Sector* represents what a developer (one that contributed heavily to the *Unreal* series of games) expects out of PlayStation 3 or any other form of new hardware, then we're going to see some amazing stuff. «

THREE'S A CROWD

JAK 3 AND RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL GO HEAD-TO-HEAD

Naughty Dog and Insomniac are at war. It's a friendly war, but it's war nonetheless. Each studio is looking to outdo the other with the third installments in their blockbuster platforming franchises. Both are bringing new tricks to the table, trying to top their previous successes. They want to impress the hell out of you. But they want to impress each other, too.

"We make the same type of games, we have nearly the same release schedule, and we have similar teams," Naughty Dog President and co-founder Jason Rubin tells us, "so there is a natural competition. But we choose to compete on content, which we do not share, rather than technology, which we do share."

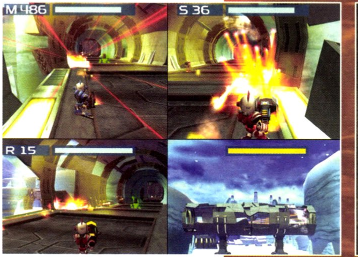
The first volley takes the form of refinement. With *Jak 3*, Naughty Dog plans to dive deeper into the story of Jak and the world of the Precursors, answering lingering questions about the history of the Precursors and about Jak's strange Eco-based powers. (Speaking of which, Jak gets a new assortment of light Eco powers to counter his dark Eco berserker rage. Using light Eco gives Jak an angelic look, allowing him to heal himself, fly for limited periods, and more.) There are also plans to tweak the combat in order to force players to use more hand-to-hand attacks instead of just the four guns from *Jak II* (all of which now have two additional levels of power). And in case you're wondering, yes, the designers will be toning down the difficulty—but more on that later.

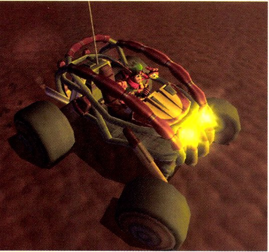
For *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal*, refinement means more enemies, more levels, more gadgets, and more weapons—weapons such as the plasma whip, the shock blaster, and our favorite, the rift inducer, which creates mini black holes that eat your enemies. It means being able to upgrade your weapons four times in the first playthrough. And it means huge, lush levels with more detail and more enemies onscreen than either of the previous games have had.

But it's the second skirmish that brings out the big guns. This is where the studios dig deep into their bag of tricks to try to bring something new to the platform-adventure formula. *Jak 3* wants to knock the walls down by, well, knocking the walls down. Whereas *Jak II* was centered in a crowded, sometimes claustrophobic city, *Jak 3* sends its eponymous hero (and Daxter, of course) into the wilderness. The desert island that serves as the game's hub is four to five times bigger than Haven City, an expansive wasteland with blowing sand and rugged terrain that you'll navigate with a collection of dune buggies, *Smuggler's Run* style.

Insomniac has something a little different in mind for *Up Your Arsenal*: four-on-four online deathmatch. No, that's not a joke; you'll now be able to take those crazy weapons and gadgets and play against other humans in the *Ratchet* world. And this isn't just a tacked-on bonus—it's also a full-fledged gameplay mode, one that Brian Hastings, VP of programming at Insomniac, claims "will change the genre more than any other advancement since *Mario 64*." The combat is lighthearted and fast-paced, but also surprisingly robust, with a selection of team-based games, destructible environments, several two-player vehicles, and always-on voice chat.

So the war is on, and the final battle takes place in the malls of America this fall, when both games will be deployed to fight for ownership rights of your hearts—and wallets. "The only metric that matters in the end," says Rubin, "is how gamers like what you have created, so we are intense competitors on the shelf. We encourage the 'rivalry,' as it allows us to work harder to make better games for our consumers." «





JAK 3 SENDS ITS EPONYMOUS HERO INTO THE WILDERNESS.

WHY JAK II WAS SO HARD

"[The problem] wasn't the overall difficulty of the game, it was the spikes," says Amy Hennig, Naughty Dog's game director. (You may remember her from her eight-year stint making *Legacy of Kain* games for Crystal Dynamics.) "You're really enjoying the flow, and then you hit a wall. And you think, I'm not good at driving; I'm not going to be able to do this. You just want to put the controller down and quit—and a lot of people did. A lot of those difficulty spikes came from the chaos of all the organic elements, like people wandering and other traffic. We didn't have experience balancing the free-form gameplay in the city.

"Also, sometimes you design a level and you think it'll be clear what the player needs to do, but it isn't," she continues. "Sometimes you get so used to the game that you think it's easy, because you know the path. And sometimes you're up against the clock and you just have to ship it."

This isn't going to be an issue this time. "We're going to be *so* careful when we focus-test *Jak 3*," Hennig assures us. "We have to take advantage of dynamic play control. Maybe we'll have the game watch the player, and if they're having difficulty, make the enemies not do as much damage or give the player more time—we can do that. This is, for me, the No. 1 focus."

IS THIS THE END?

Now that these two trilogies have been (ostensibly) wrapped up, what's next for these powerhouse studios? "It's not a given that Naughty Dog is always going to do cute and colorful games," says Naughty Dog game director Amy Hennig. "I think everybody would like to do something that's a little more cinematic and serious. Not dead serious—not *Kain* serious—but reaching a little bit higher than what you might normally see in a videogame."

And as for Insomniac? "We'll always make games like *Ratchet & Clank*," says Insomniac President Ted Price. "We love the lighthearted side of games, and we've definitely developed an expertise in this genre. But...that doesn't mean we can't branch out into other genres as well."

WAR GAMES

WAR: WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? ABSOLUTELY NOTHIN'— UNLESS YOU COUNT THE FINE SELECTION OF WAR GAMES COMING OUT THIS YEAR.

HISTORY OF WAR

[A LONG TIME AGO]

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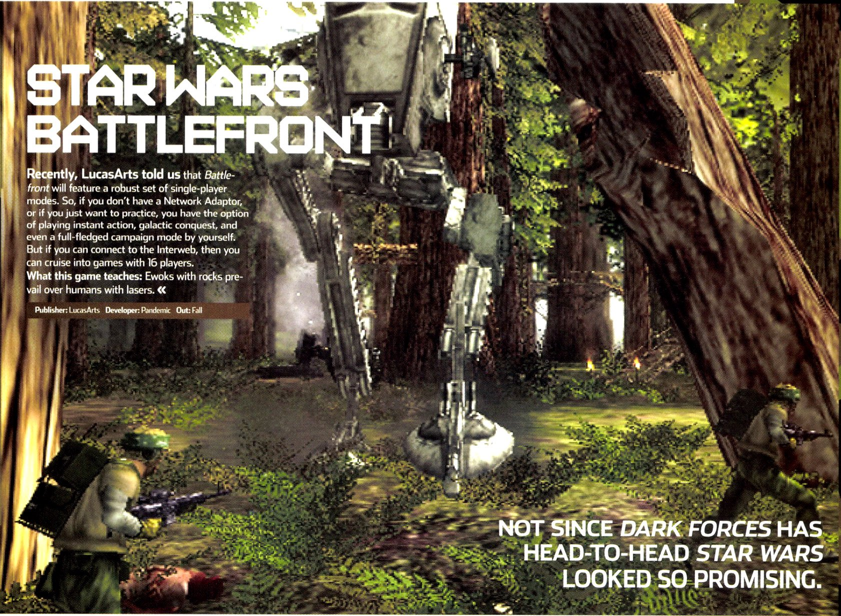


STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

Recently, LucasArts told us that *Battlefront* will feature a robust set of single-player modes. So, if you don't have a Network Adaptor, or if you just want to practice, you have the option of playing instant action, galactic conquest, and even a full-fledged campaign mode by yourself. But if you can connect to the Interweb, then you can cruise into games with 16 players.
What this game teaches: Ewoks with rocks prevail over humans with lasers. «

Publisher: LucasArts **Developer:** Pandemic **Out:** Fall

NOT SINCE *DARK FORCES* HAS HEAD-TO-HEAD *STAR WARS* LOOKED SO PROMISING.

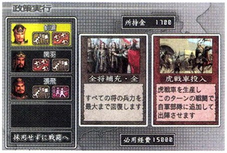
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES

The conflict in Three Kingdoms-era China in the third century A.D. is one of the most epic in world history—and it actually involved a helluva lot more than three kingdoms. Koei's newest *Dynasty Warriors* combines the series' traditional wide-open, action-packed combat with the command-and-conquer attitude of games like *Risk*.
What this game teaches: The KO count suggests no one ever died in battle. No wonder there are so many people in China! «

Publisher: Koei **Developer:** Omega Force **Out:** September

Jan 215 AD Turn 15 State 46

DYNASTY INDEED
Counting the *Xtreme Legends* expansions, *Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires* is Koei's 20th game set during the Three Kingdoms era. The original *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* came out in 1991.



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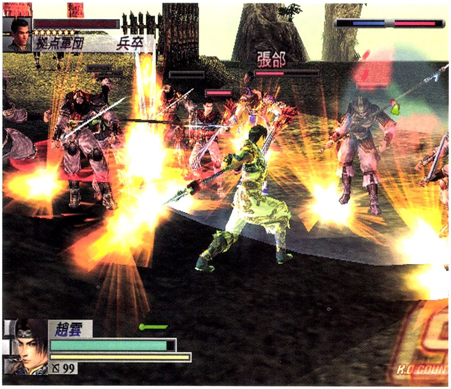


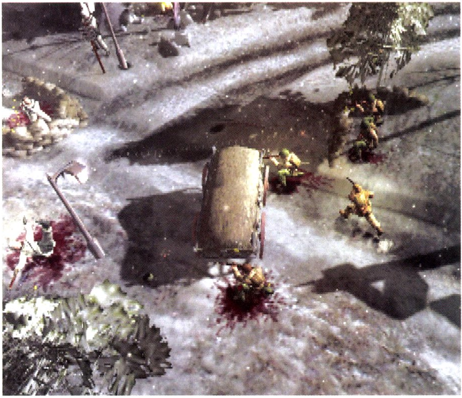
COMBAT ELITE

WWII PARATROOPERS

Dropped in by the thousands on D-Day, paratroopers handled all the dirty work on the European front, from rescuing POWs to tracking down Hitler's secret bunker. *Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers* gives these proud men the treatment they deserve, but don't expect the usual *Medal of Honor* first-person slog. The game uses an overhead view that immediately brings up comparisons to *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* (probably because it's based on the *Dark Alliance* engine). But this is no RPG—it's an action game with a heavy emphasis on small-arms combat. You'll be behind enemy lines by yourself in most of the 45 missions, so careful aim and stealth play important roles. Think of it as *Commando* with a tactical bent and you've got the right idea. You'll even get to play with a friend in a single-screen co-op mode.

What this game teaches: How did WWII soldiers know they were being targeted? They glowed. «

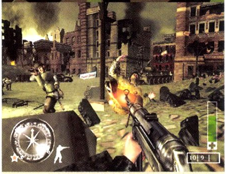
Publisher: Acclaim **Developer:** Battleborne **Out:** June



ENGINEERING

Combat Elite is the fifth game to use the *Dark Alliance* engine. The engine has been modified for use in *Dark Alliance II*, *Champions of Norrath*, and *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel*.

CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR



This PC megahit is coming over to the consoles! *Call of Duty* will use intense scripted sequences to show you what the Yanks, the Brits, and even the Russkies did in WWII—which was primarily hunkering down in trenches and beating up Nazis.

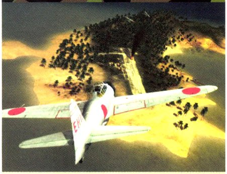
What this game teaches: World War II wasn't won by a single man, but by a whole lot of respawning guys teamed up together.

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Spark **Out:** October

WEIRD

Both Infinity Ward, which developed *Call of Duty* on PC, and Spark, which is developing *Finest Hour*, were founded by former members of EA's *Medal of Honor* teams.

MIDWAY

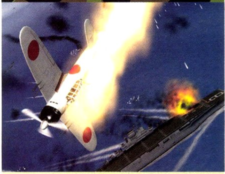


Think of the *Conflict* franchise but focused entirely on naval and air power in the Pacific theater of WWII. Rather than control squads of men, you control fleets of boats and squadrons of airplanes—while you can easily hop from one plane or boat to another, the computer controls the rest of your team.

What this game teaches: When one plane or boat goes down, there's always another.

Publisher: TBA **Developer:** SCi **Out:** TBA

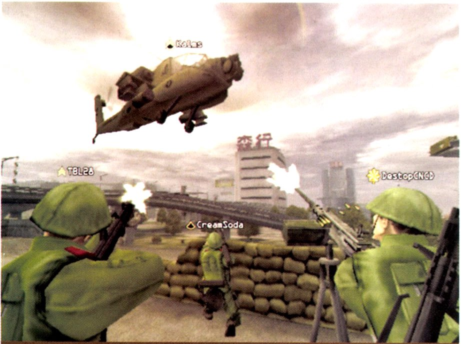
HEROES OF THE PACIFIC



Another Pacific theater game, but it takes place just on airplanes. Think of it as *Secret Weapons Over Normandy*, but filled with Corsairs and Zeros and other wacky planes. Heck, there are even multiplayer cooperative missions, so you can go online with a buddy to shoot some planes down.

What this game teaches: Planes are capable of playing capture the flag.

Publisher: Encore **Developer:** Thatgame **Out:** Holidays



BATTLEFIELD MODERN COMBAT

It's kind of fitting that the original franchise that partially inspired *Star Wars Battlefront* is finally landing on PS2. While PC gamers have already sent *Battlefield 1942* and *Battlefield Vietnam* rocketing up the sales charts, PS2 gamers will get all the fun of *Battlefield* along with more modernity. Expect to see a large variety of maps depicting "hot spots" throughout the world—no numbers have been named, but we can hope for at least 16 players online, if not more. Each of these players gets to sport modern weaponry, like assault rifles and shotguns, but it wouldn't be a *Battlefield* game without the ability to hop into vehicles like tanks, airplanes, and attack helicopters. There are even rumors that there will be destructible environments. *Battlefield* took online gaming a huge step forward on PC, and *Modern Combat*, if done right, could very well do the same thing for PS2.
What this game teaches: Real-world warfare is filled with spawn campers. «

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** Digital Illusions **Out:** Fall

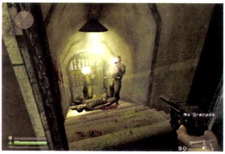
COLD WINTER

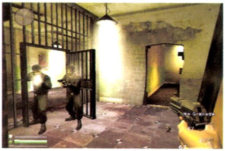
Bad, bad things are about to happen to Andrew Sterling, an MI6 agent sent to China to gather information on a military facility. While taking pictures of a top-secret location, Sterling's caught by Chinese authorities and sentenced to death. Fortunately, he escapes from his cell and battles his way out of the prison, setting a possible political catastrophe in motion at the same time. *Cold Winter* takes Sterling to several different locations where you can use dozens of weapons and gadgets—including listening devices, satellite phones, night-vision goggles, and even a GPS tracker—to unravel the plot.
What this game teaches: British spies, even in the '00s, are totally sweet. «

Publisher: Vivendi Universal **Developer:** Swordfish **Out:** October

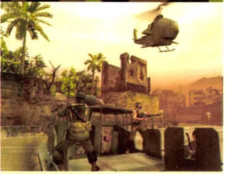
GLOBAL FREQUENCY
PLANET BLAZE

COMIC RELIEF
Comic writer Warren Ellis (*Red*, *Global Frequency*) is consulting on the *Cold Winter* plot and is writing the script for 10 cinematic sequences.





CONFLICT: VIETNAM

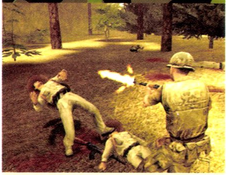


The third *Conflict* game puts you in control of four rookies making their way through 14 missions in the heart of Vietnam. Additions include destructible environments, more vehicles, and the chance to develop specific abilities within your squad (such as sniper, medic, demolition, and leadership). **What this game teaches:** Twenty-eight days in the Vietnam War is pretty hellish.

Publisher: Gathering **Developer:** Pivotal **Out:** Fall

FASHIONABLE!
With *ShellShock*, *Conflict: Vietnam*, and the PC's *Battlefield Vietnam*, it looks like 'Nam is set to be this year's WWII. Quick, find those Doors tapes.

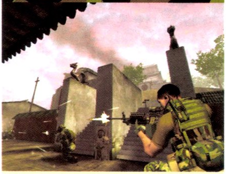
SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67



Take *SOCOM*'s smooth controls, add superdetailed jungle environments and a dash of controversy, and you have *ShellShock*. We got some hands-on time with this graphic game, and while we didn't see the controversial special-ops stuff, the traditional "search-and-destroy" missions feel fairly solid already.
What this game teaches: Sometimes an AK can shoot strongly enough to lop heads off.

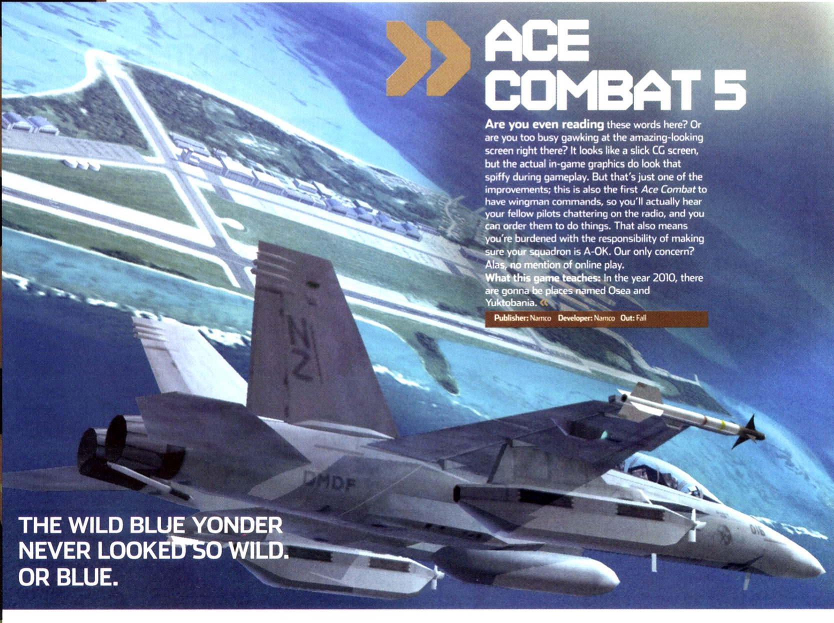
Publisher: Eidos **Developer:** Guerrilla **Out:** Summer

GHOST RECON 2



Red Storm is going to up the ante in terms of depicting the chaos of war. Expect to see tons of exploding vehicles, crashing aircraft, and massive air strikes that cause buildings to collapse. It's still a tactical team-based shooter, but with an extra layer of polish, so even non-strategy nerds can get in on it.
What this game teaches: The next big war is in Asia—somewhere.

Publisher: Ubisoft **Developer:** Red Storm **Out:** Fall



ACE COMBAT 5

Are you even reading these words here? Or are you too busy gawking at the amazing-looking screen right there? It looks like a slick CG screen, but the actual in-game graphics do look that spiffy during gameplay. But that's just one of the improvements; this is also the first *Ace Combat* to have wingman commands, so you'll actually hear your fellow pilots chattering on the radio, and you can order them to do things. That also means you're burdened with the responsibility of making sure your squadron is A-OK. Our only concern? Alas, no mention of online play.

What this game teaches: In the year 2010, there are gonna be places named Osea and Yuktobania. «

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Namco **Out:** Fall

THE WILD BLUE YONDER NEVER LOOKED SO WILD. OR BLUE.

MERCENARIES

There's a pretty simple yet cool design philosophy at work here: If you can see it, you can pilot it, steal it, or blow it up. With 52 "find this fugitive somewhere in North Korea" missions and three distinct characters, you can expect a lot of playtime out of this one.

What this game teaches: British female mercenaries are just as good at fugitive hunting as American or Swedish male mercenaries.

Publisher: LucasArts **Developer:** Pandemic **Out:** Fall

KILLZONE

***Killzone* is possibly** the most beautifully gritty game on PS2 right now. All sorts of graphic tricks are being used to portray a totally bleak world. *Killzone* will also deliver some intense action, thanks to set pieces like a skirmish in a mall, jungle missions, and harsh urban combat in a bombed-out city.

What this game teaches: Even in the far future, war is good for absolutely nothing.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Guerrilla **Out:** October

FRONT MISSION 4

We could go on and on about how cool this in-depth strategy-RPG is and how awesomely pretty it looks when you have wanzers (read: giant robots) punching and rocketing the crap out of one another. But since there's a demo of it on our disc this month, you should just experience it for yourself.

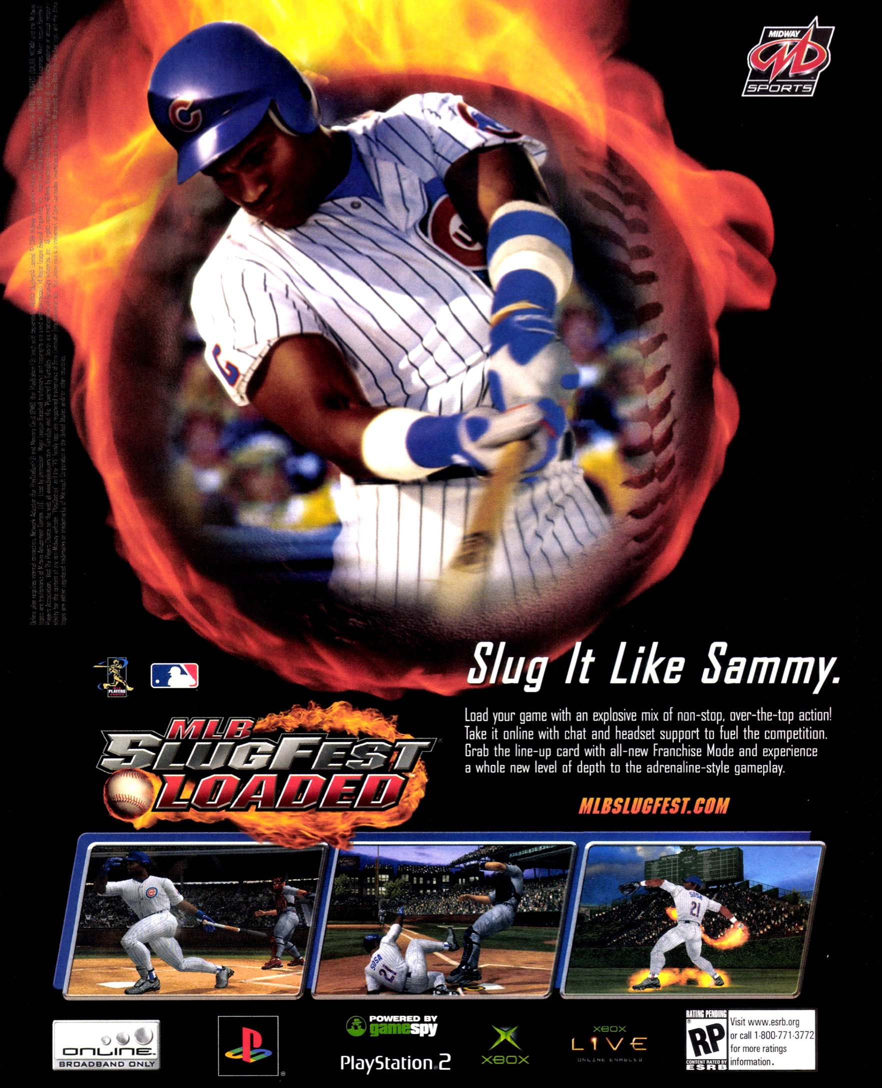
What this game teaches: It takes only 90 years for us to make cool giant robots.

Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Square Enix **Out:** June

PLAY THE DEMO!

GET YOUR WANZER ON

You get two levels here: Welcome to the Durandal, which is basically a training mission, and The First Mission. That's a long one, so you'll have plenty of opportunities to try out different tactics—and sample the fantastically stereotypical accent on that Italian gentleman.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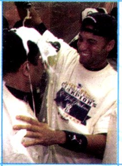
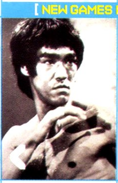
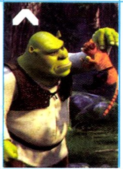
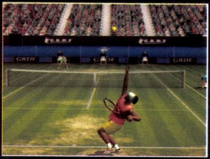
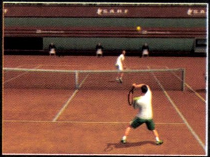
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Find a pole and dance around it—today is **May Day.**
2	**3** Let's hear it for movie licenses! ***The Mummy, Shrek 2,*** and ***Van Helsing*** come out this week. Also out: ***Ribbit King, Ultimate Muscle,*** and ***Samurai Warriors.*** [NEW GAMES]	**4** Craving tactical action set in the future? What luck! Crave's ***Future Tactics*** is in stores today. Also, ***Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*** hits too. If you care.	**5** It's Cinco de Mayo! Buy beer, and limes.	**6** Wave a final farewell to your Thursday night buddies—now that you have no more ***Friends,*** it's a perfect time to hook up that Network Adaptor and look for new ones online.	**7** Hugh Jackman trades in his Wolfman blades for a rifle as he gears up for monster hunting in today's movie opening ***Van Helsing.***	
9 Seattle residents can compete for the chance to be world champion—of the Atari 2600—at the **NorthWest Classic Games Enthusiasts Expo**. Check out nwcge.org for details.	**10** Atari's cool ***Transformers*** game is out today. Check out our review on page 92.	**11** Sony will hold its pre-E3 press conference today, where it will finally reveal what the **PSP** looks like. Check www.1UP.com before lunch to see pictures!	**12** It's **E3** time! If we're lucky, we might get to hang with some hot booth babes. If we're realistic, we'll realize that we're going to be hanging with sweaty game journalists. [NEW GAMES REVEALED: CHECK www.1UP.com]	**13** Naki's **Wireless Dance Pad** will be in stores today. It's a huge help for clumsy dancers who keep tripping on wires.	**14** Beware of Greeks bearing gifts. Movie epic ***Troy*** opens today.	
16 Watch cover boys Derek Jeter and Jason Giambi as the Yankees take on the Mariners. Or, if you don't happen to live on either of the coasts, arrange an online version of the matchup.		**18** Awesome Bruce Lee flick ***Enter the Dragon*** is released on DVD today.		**20**	**21** ***Shrek 2*** opens in theaters today. Hopefully without that damn Smash Mouth song.	**22**
23/30 It's the season finale of ***The Sopranos*** tonight. Originally, this would have been the last episode ever, but the cast and crew have agreed to come back for a sixth and final season.	**24/31** Pull out your grill, kids—not only is it **Memorial Day**, but it's also your last chance to commemorate **National Barbecue Month** and **National Hamburger Month**.	**25** Ready your EyeToys—***Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*** comes out today. Also, the season finale of ***24*** airs tonight. Have you been keeping up? [NEW GAMES]	**26** You'll be able to buy **Prima's *DRIV3R* guide** today. When's the game out? Next week.	**27**		**29**

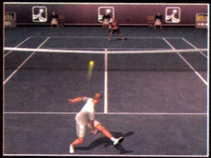
16 Pros, 4 Grand Slams and YOU.



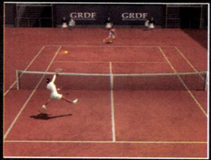
Compete in the actual licensed Grand Slam tournaments: Australian Open, Roland Garros (French Open), Wimbledon and U.S. Open.



Play AS, WITH, or AGAINST 16 real life Top Tennis Pros!



Pro Tournament Mode - Create a player, train and develop your skills, and enter tournaments to rise through the tennis rankings all the way to the top.



Experience total control from service, the baseline, and at the net.

Australian Open

ROLAND GARROS FRENCH OPEN

THE CHAMPIONSHIPS WIMBLEDON

US OPEN 2004

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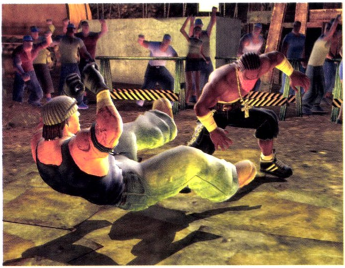
MO' DEF

THE DEF JAM CREW IS BACK, BIGGER AND BADDER THAN BEFORE



EA and famed wrestling developer Aki are tag-teaming again for the sequel to the immensely popular wrestling game *Def Jam Vendetta*. Like its predecessor, *Def Jam Vendetta II* features some of the most notable names in hip-hop, and this time around, there are a lot more of them. Aki plans to include more than 35 artists in the game (there are 75 characters total), including Flava Flav, Ice-T, Joe Budden, Ludacris, Method Man, Redman, Slick Rick, Snoop Dogg, and Busta Rhymes. The female contingent will be represented by the likes of Lil' Kim, along with questionable selections such as Carmen Electra and Def Jam founder Russell Simmons' wife, Kimora Lee Simmons.

The roster isn't the only feature beefed up for the sequel. The entire fighting engine is much more dynamic than in the original game, thanks largely to the addition of multiple fighting styles, ranging from street fighting and kickboxing to wrestling and generic martial arts. Some of the match types change things up even more. One minute, you'll be in a basic one-on-one match, and the next thing you know, you'll be smashing your opponent's car in the single-player mode.

If that's not crazy enough for you, there are also interactive environments that let you smash various types of objects, and even the crowd watching the match gets involved if any of the fighters get a little too close for comfort. Let's not forget about the dozens of available weapons that are perfect for pummeling an opponent when fists and feet aren't getting the job done.

Other significant improvements include a robust create-a-player mode in which you can create an entirely new fighter, complete with tattoos and the obligatory bling. Taking it one step further, EA has licensed several hip-hop clothing lines (Sean Jean, Phat Farm, Rocawear, Def Jam University) for the game, making it possible for your custom fighter to look good while punching someone in the face. «

DEF JAM ONLINE
You can take the fight online when *Def Jam Vendetta II* is released this fall.

DATA STREAM

SIM AND THE CITY

The Sims are moving to the city for the latest installment of the popular real-life simulator franchise. The new game has a revamped character-creation engine, a faster motives system, and a whole bunch of new ways to meet friends. Also, the big city gives Sims a chance to strut their stuff at posh night clubs and earn only the fanciest of furniture and other decorations for an upscale downtown apartment.

KRI SEQUEL

In an effort to break the world record for number of sequels in development at a single time, Sony's revealed a follow-up to *The Mark of Kri* called *The Rise of the Kasai*. The game takes place 10 years after and 10 years prior to the original game and features multiple playable characters, including Rau and his sister Tati. Each character has a unique set of weapons and attacks that are based on the unique combat system introduced in the original. It also supports cooperative two-player offline and online action.

ZOE FLOWER

WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION

ZOE FLOWER
Makes TV shows, music videos, and appears on TV and radio as "Gamer Girl." Check out her work at www.zoeflower.com.

I've never been one to harp on the issue of videogame violence, a topic that has been beaten to death. But I might be changing my tune after observing the recent media witch-hunt.

Last month, there was a headline story in the newspaper about *Grand Theft Auto* and how it encourages gun violence against the police. The story was littered with statistics that "proved" this argument. Gun violence against cops is on the rise, as are sales of mature and/or violent videogames. Logically, you can deduce that games therefore cause violence. Right?

I calmed myself with some old-school *Time Crisis* action before picking up the paper again. This time, there was a story that accused some games, including *SOCOM*, of promoting and glamorizing terrorist activities; this argument has forced the removal of certain locales from some games to prevent legal action. The story included a sidebar stating that the family of a murder victim had filed a $250 million lawsuit against Rockstar because two kids cited *GTA* as the reason they randomly shot a man. Of course, despite millions of copies of the game being sold, one random act proves that *GTA* kills people.

Feeling like I might go insane with rage, I decided to forgo reading altogether and turned on the television, where surely games would never surface in mainstream news. Alas, I witnessed an early morning journalist reporting cluelessly on the violence in *Manhunt*, shaking his head in disappointment that such a horrific thing could ever be conceived of and released to "unwitting consumers and children." Not once did he mention the game's ESRB rating; instead, he used the airtime to reflect on Columbine before switching gears to promote Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, which was illustrated by a series of gory shots before being interrupted to go live to Haiti to show a dead man in the street. All this was at 7 a.m., when plenty of kids are cartoon surfing. But if you watch/read/listen to the news, you might believe they are playing videogames and thinking of ways to kill you.

NOT ONCE DID HE MENTION THE GAME'S ESRB RATING; INSTEAD, HE USED THE AIRTIME TO REFLECT ON COLUMBINE.

Perhaps that mindless anchorman has been conditioned by a culture that accepts other media as "art," even if it contains violence. Was Francis Ford Coppola sued for making *The Godfather*? No, he won an Oscar. Before you spam me for encouraging violence, let me be clear: I am simply asking that the media take its collective head out of its ass and start portraying games objectively and in relation to the other forms of entertainment on the market.

Of course, then there would be little controversy. And who wants to report that? «

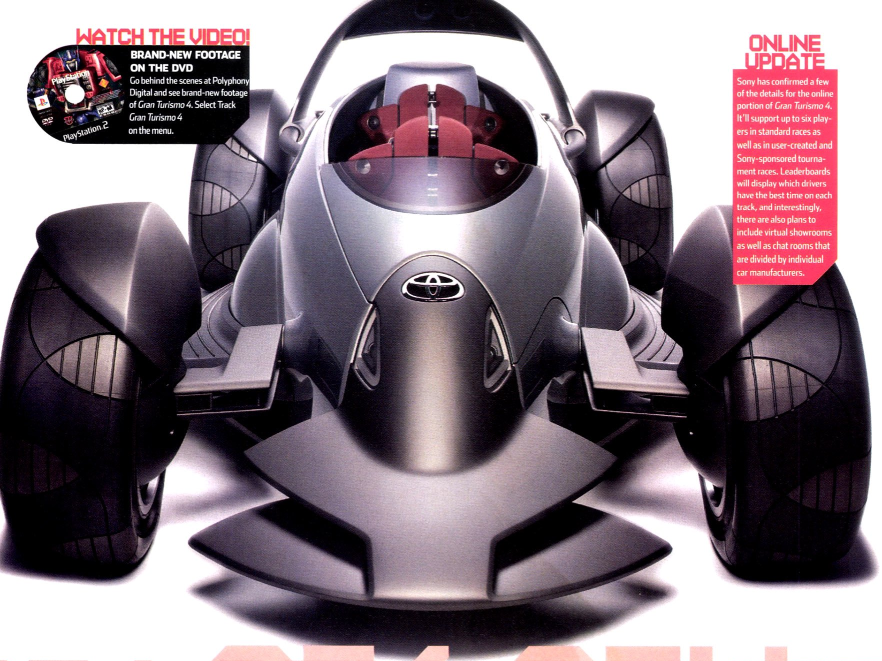
WATCH THE VIDEO!

BRAND-NEW FOOTAGE ON THE DVD

Go behind the scenes at Polyphony Digital and see brand-new footage of *Gran Turismo 4*. Select Track *Gran Turismo 4* on the menu.

ONLINE UPDATE

Sony has confirmed a few of the details for the online portion of *Gran Turismo 4*. It'll support up to six players in standard races as well as in user-created and Sony-sponsored tournament races. Leaderboards will display which drivers have the best time on each track, and interestingly, there are also plans to include virtual showrooms as well as chat rooms that are divided by individual car manufacturers.



GT4 CELL POWER

TOYOTA WANTS TO WOO YOU WITH AN ELECTRIC SPACE BUGGY

The inclusion of Toyota's futuristic-looking MTRC (Motor Triathlon Race Car) concept car in *Gran Turismo 4* is a much more significant event than simply a cool car turning up in a cool car game. For Toyota, it reflects a desire to be seen as more hip to what the kids are into and shake off its sensible family car image. The Camry may be the best-selling sedan in the world, but it has all the personality of a boiled potato. Toyota has acknowledged that the younger generations seek more excitement from their rides, and the company is embracing videogames as a part of our culture. The MTRC is designed to address the expectations of the gaming generation with something that shows off what the world's second-largest car company claims to be good at, namely motor sports (it's gotten quite good at F1, CART, WRC, and Le Mans lately), four-wheel-drive vehicles, and eco-friendly machines.

The MTRC is a hydrogen-fuel-cell-powered two-seater that is able to compete in three types of races by adapting its settings to different environments. For screaming around a race track, the car hunkers down and sucks up to the asphalt like an Indy car; for street racing, it lifts itself up a little and tweaks the tuning of the four electric motors that power the wheels individually; and for off-road racing, it jacks up like a dune buggy so it can bounce around with the best of them.

I WANT ONE, NOW

The MTRC already made an appearance in *GT4 Prologue* and shows why fuel-cell cars are the way of the future. Electric motors provide incredible torque for stupendous acceleration, and the hydrogen fuel cell makes the engine efficient and eco-friendly.

TOYOTA'S ENTHUSIASM IS ANOTHER STEP TOWARD ACHIEVING YAMAUCHI'S VISION.

The thing even has clever wheels that can detect the kind of road surface it's on and tweak both suspension and tire-pressure settings accordingly. Let's see your Corolla do that.

For *Gran Turismo*, Toyota's enthusiasm is another step toward achieving *GT* creator Kazunori Yamauchi's vision of the franchise becoming the definition of automotive media. Instead of just reading about cars in magazines, you can try them out and see for yourself if the manufacturer is smoking its own dope. "We have taken the opportunity of extracting the technology from a futuristic car and reproducing it in a virtual world," says Yamauchi, parsed through a very thorough PR department. "This has been a very exciting experience for our team, who are always curious about new technology."

The MTRC certainly is that, and if Toyota ever puts the car into production (fuel-cell technology probably won't be with us before 2010), it will certainly be capable of worrying today's supercars. If its performance in *GT4 Prologue* is anything to go by (which is kinda the point), the thing moves like a rocket. «

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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or call 1-800-771-3772
for more ratings
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REFLECTIONS INTERACTIVE

ATARI

ENTHUSIA

KONAMI'S POST-GRAN TURISMO 4 ENTHUSIASM

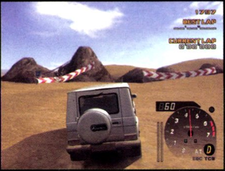
With anticipation for *Gran Turismo 4* set to fever pitch, the time has come to look at what lies beyond. *GT* wannabes (real-world cars, shiny graphics, bunch o' tracks, yeah yeah, etc.) are a dime a dozen, so finding that diamond in the rough is no easy task. That said, we can say with certainty that Konami's upcoming racing game, *Enthusia*, is one to watch, based on our playtime at Konami's Redwood City headquarters.

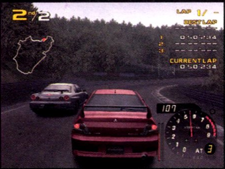
The heart of the game is indeed similar to *Gran Turismo 4*—it's hard not to be when your game is about cars. Graphically, *Enthusia* rests somewhere between *Gran Turismo 4*'s beautifully saturated tones and *Need for Speed Underground*'s eye-catching urban environments, but that doesn't tell the whole tale. Car models in particular benefit from painstaking detail in the bodywork, from the chassis itself all the way down to the lit license-plate holders and logos.

But graphics are the least of a racing game's concern—success lies in a game's controls, and *Enthusia* brings something new to the table. Produced by Manabu Akita, a former Namco designer who was responsible for the PS1 classic *Rage Racer*, *Enthusia*'s control system is nothing short of inspired. Although more of a *GT*-style racing simulation than a *Ridge Racer*-type arcade game, *Enthusia* features something called the Visual Gravity System (VGS). Via subtle onscreen indicators, the player can tell when his car has reached maximum G force and when he should adjust his wheels and speed to compensate. Too many games (*Gran Turismo* included) take for granted a player's understanding of car physics, and Konami's title offers players a discreet intuitive manner with which to become better racing-game drivers.

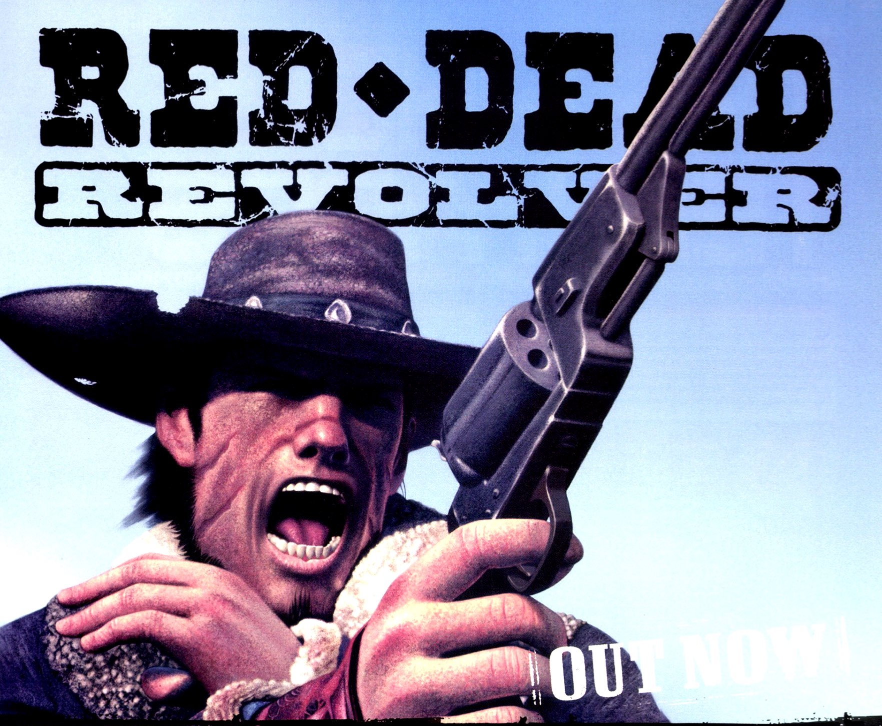
Enthusia is set for a March 2005 release, so it'll be a little while before we put the spurs into it, but with over 200 cars (no minivans, thanks) and 50 tracks to zoom around on, we're looking forward to life after *GT4*. « *James Mielke*

THE HEART OF THE GAME IS SIMILAR TO *GRAN TURISMO 4*.





RED · DEAD REVOLVER



WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/REDDEADREVOLVER

XBOX

MATURE 17+
M
Blood
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation 2

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THE WHOLE TEN YARDS

EA SPORTS UNVEILS ITS PLANS FOR MADDEN, NCAA FOOTBALL, AND NASCAR

EA Sports has always said, "If it's in the game, it's in the game." The company has a nasty tendency to prove itself wrong, though, as it continues to add new features to its yearly franchises. Will *this* finally be the year that its bold statement holds true? Probably not completely—but pretty damn close. Here's everything new you can expect out of this year's *Madden*, *NCAA Football*, and *NASCAR* series.

MADDEN NFL 2004

MADDEN NFL 2005

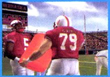
EA knows how most people play defense in *Madden*—badly. Either that or they just pick a lineman and hope the rest of the team manages to pull its weight. With this in mind, Tiburon is hard at work on refining the use of defense in *Madden NFL 2005*. Expect defensive backs to more aggressively swat and pick at the ball, while outside defenders close in more quickly on scramblers like Michael Vick. You can also choose defensive hot routes now, and instead of using coverage audibles to command several players at once, you have the power to individualize such functions.

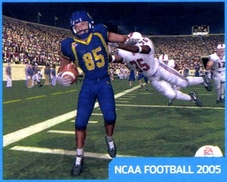
The coolest, most accessible new defensive feature, though, is definitely the "hit stick." By timing a press of the right analog stick just perfectly, your defender can deliver a crushing blow that significantly ups the chances of a fumble—and at the very least, you get to see a really cool animation (even if you miss).

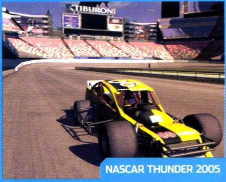
Beyond defense, Tiburon has also instituted other cool bells and whistles. You'll see day slowly fade into night, for instance, as well as weather conditions change throughout a game. Meanwhile, player models have received a total overhaul—they look better than ever.

Go figure. So does *Madden* as a whole.

TIBURON IS HARD AT WORK ON REFINING THE USE OF DEFENSE.


In *NCAA Football 2005*, expect to see the winning coach get drenched in Gatorade (or, more likely, a generic equivalent) near the end of a game. (Not with five minutes left and a not-so-commanding 2-0 lead, as indicated by this screenshot.)


NCAA FOOTBALL 2005


NASCAR THUNDER 2005

NCAA FOOTBALL 2005

If there's one thing that might surprise you about *NCAA Football 2005*, it's this: Even if you've always tended to pass off *NCAA* as *Madden: The College Edition*, there's no way you can do that anymore. *NCAA* has its own cool new features you won't find in its pro-focused big brother.

Atmosphere plays a huge role in college sports, and beyond adding actions like Florida's Gator Chomp or Texas' Hook 'Em Horns, you really get a sense of what the term "home-field advantage" means this year. If the conditions are right (the beginning of a game, a large lead, etc.), the home-team player can rally his fans to the point that the visitors can't hear audibles. Then again, a home team losing 21-0 isn't going to get much excitement behind it.

Home field also factors into players' composure, which you can also affect with a huge hit or other big play. Composure constantly changes, and you can use the right analog stick to gauge yours against the competition's—be sure to exploit any mismatches you see.

Will taking these strides to separate *NCAA* from *Madden* help or hurt the franchise? We'll know for sure come July.

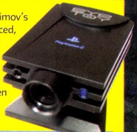
NASCAR THUNDER 2005

Three words sum up what EA Sports' *NASCAR* experience is all about this year: "Live the life." Taking a sort of *Tony Hawk's Underground* approach, *NASCAR Thunder 2005* features a story mode that stars you as a hotshot stock-car driver working his way up from chump to champ. It all starts humbly enough in street races, and from there you must prove yourself in the Modified, Truck, and Busch circuits.

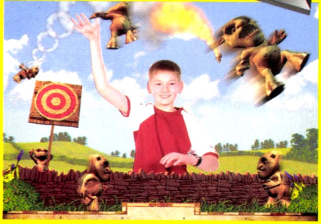
By the time you're ready for the Nextel Cup, you'll get even more insight into the life of a pro race driver. The way you drive—your success, your tendency to drive clean or dirty, etc.—determines the loyalty of your fans and is measured in merchandise sales. You even get to look your fans in the eye during autograph-session minigames, and you can personally confront your rivals once a race concludes. Ever wanted to clock Jeff Gordon? Now's your chance! «

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

HARRY'S GOT HIS EYETOY ON YOU



Anyone looking for an example of Asimov's saying that any technology, sufficiently advanced, is indistinguishable from magic might want to check out *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. It's the first third-party game to actually use the EyeToy, which is finally showing some of its potential. In fact, the game even uses an aspect of the EyeToy that most of us didn't even know about—the mic!



At the very beginning of the game, you can jump into a special After School Activity section. The six minigames let the EyeToy show off a variety of its technological features.

CHOCOLATE FROGS
Clap your hands (the EyeToy tracks you by sound) to squish these rampant treats.

SEEKER PRACTICE
Rather than play another Quidditch match like in the other games, find out for yourself whether you're seeker material. The Snitch zips around incredibly fast, and you attempt to, well, snatch it.

DE-GNOMING HAGRID'S GARDEN
Slap all the gnomes away—like a Hogwarts version of Kung Foo.

GOBSTONES
Grab the colored stones while avoiding the black ones.

EXPLODING SNAP
Match the card in your deck with the one onscreen (similar to Simon says) to create an explosion—more matches make bigger explosions.

ZONKO'S JOKE SHOP
A two-part game in which you smash the various dung bombs and then wipe their grime away from the screen.

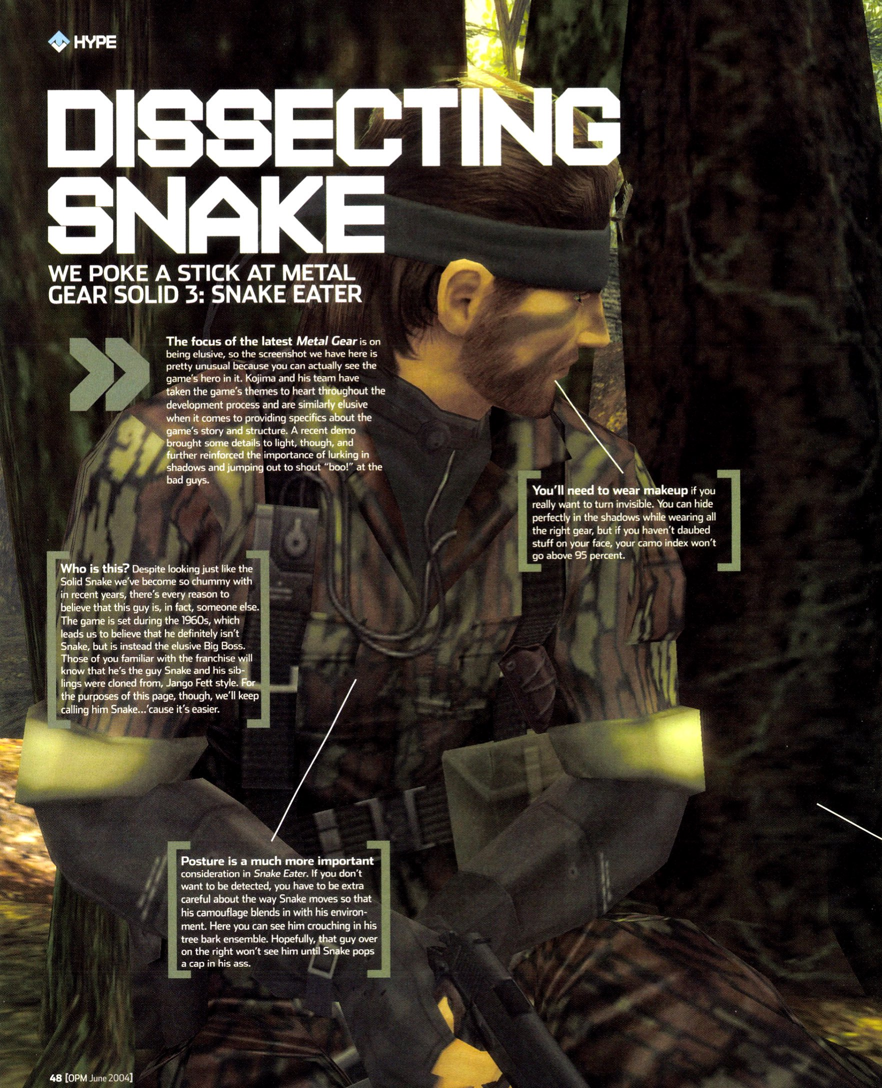
Occasionally, while you're engaged in these activities, a ghost will float over and start messing with you—you're going to have to shout to drive him away (again making use of the EyeToy's built-in mic).

While these are more elaborate versions of the stuff found on the original *EyeToy: Play* disc, we see it as a solid beginning. Hopefully, with word of the EyeToy's motion-tracking technology, combined with some good voice-recognition tech, perhaps *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* will feature...actual spellcasting? «

***PRISONER OF AZKABAN* USES AN ASPECT OF THE EYETOY THAT MOST OF US DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT: THE MIC.**

DISSECTING SNAKE

WE POKE A STICK AT METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

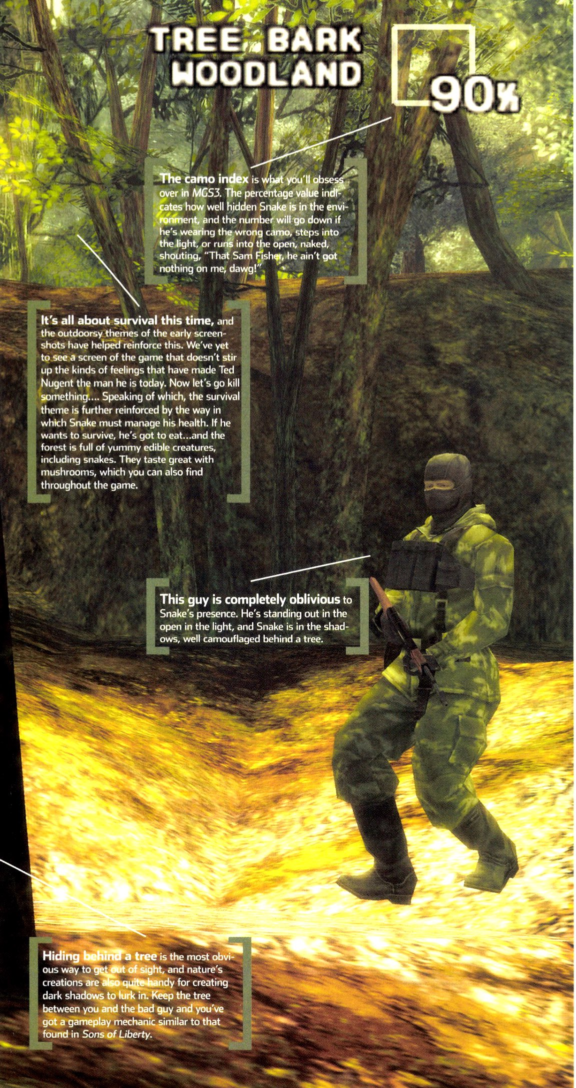


The focus of the latest *Metal Gear* is on being elusive, so the screenshot we have here is pretty unusual because you can actually see the game's hero in it. Kojima and his team have taken the game's themes to heart throughout the development process and are similarly elusive when it comes to providing specifics about the game's story and structure. A recent demo brought some details to light, though, and further reinforced the importance of lurking in shadows and jumping out to shout "boo!" at the bad guys.

You'll need to wear makeup if you really want to turn invisible. You can hide perfectly in the shadows while wearing all the right gear, but if you haven't daubed stuff on your face, your camo index won't go above 95 percent.

Who is this? Despite looking just like the Solid Snake we've become so chummy with in recent years, there's every reason to believe that this guy is, in fact, someone else. The game is set during the 1960s, which leads us to believe that he definitely isn't Snake, but is instead the elusive Big Boss. Those of you familiar with the franchise will know that he's the guy Snake and his siblings were cloned from, Jango Fett style. For the purposes of this page, though, we'll keep calling him Snake...'cause it's easier.

Posture is a much more important consideration in *Snake Eater*. If you don't want to be detected, you have to be extra careful about the way Snake moves so that his camouflage blends in with his environment. Here you can see him crouching in his tree bark ensemble. Hopefully, that guy over on the right won't see him until Snake pops a cap in his ass.

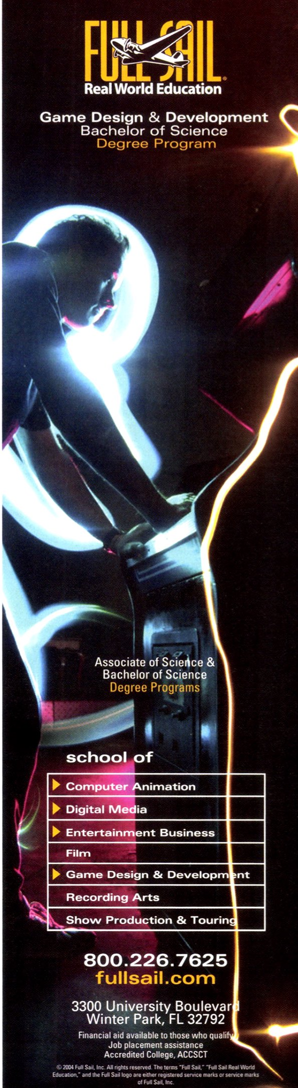


The camo index is what you'll obsess over in *MGS3*. The percentage value indicates how well hidden Snake is in the environment, and the number will go down if he's wearing the wrong camo, steps into the light, or runs into the open, naked, shouting, "That Sam Fisher, he ain't got nothing on me, dawg!"

It's all about survival this time, and the outdoorsy themes of the early screenshots have helped reinforce this. We've yet to see a screen of the game that doesn't stir up the kinds of feelings that have made Ted Nugent the man he is today. Now let's go kill something.... Speaking of which, the survival theme is further reinforced by the way in which Snake must manage his health. If he wants to survive, he's got to eat...and the forest is full of yummy edible creatures, including snakes. They taste great with mushrooms, which you can also find throughout the game.

This guy is completely oblivious to Snake's presence. He's standing out in the open in the light, and Snake is in the shadows, well camouflaged behind a tree.

Hiding behind a tree is the most obvious way to get out of sight, and nature's creations are also quite handy for creating dark shadows to lurk in. Keep the tree between you and the bad guy and you've got a gameplay mechanic similar to that found in *Sons of Liberty*.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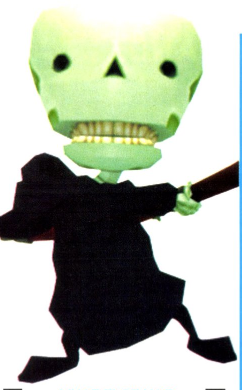
DEATH TO THE PSP

THE FUTURE LOOKS GRIM FOR SONY'S HANDHELD



Grim Reaper that is! During Sony's press conference at this year's Game Developers Conference, representatives from Backbone Entertainment (a division of Digital Eclipse) had the distinction of giving the first public showing of a PSP game, *Death, Jr.* As you might suspect from the title, the game follows the adventures of Death's offspring in an almost Tim Burton and *Day of the Dead*–inspired setting. Few details were released about the game, but some brief footage of the little tyke in action was shown, including some platforming and a bunch of special effects that are built into the PSP hardware.

The footage was captured from the PSP emulator, so no actual hardware was on hand, but folks from Backbone repeatedly stated how easy it was to get the basic elements of the game up and running on the emulator within a relatively short period of time. That's a good sign for any PS2 developer who had trouble with Sony's hardware in its early days. You can expect to hear more about *Death, Jr.* and other PSP games at this year's E3. «

THAT'S A GOOD SIGN FOR ANY PS2 DEVELOPER.

THE PRICE OF PSP

With all that power at their disposal, developers and publishers have to crank out a little more cash than they normally would for a portable game. In fact, Sony suggests that development teams will have to be around the same size as those working on Dreamcast projects.

WHAT ELSE HAS IT DONE?

Digital Eclipse has been around for a while, and most of its current work is focused on compilations and GBA games. Here's a short list of some of its bigger games:

Midway Arcade Treasures (PS2)
Spyro: Attack of the Rhynocs (GBA)
Phantasy Star Collection (GBA)
Spider-Man: The Movie (GBA)
Rayman Advance (GBA)

PSP GLOSSARY

Impress your friends with these handy PSP terms.

API
It stands for application programming interface, and it's a big deal as far the PSP is concerned. Instead of forcing programmers to mess around with the hardware to create effects, they can use the API to access built-in features directly. It'll cut down on programming time and give most developers an even playing field.

DEFERRED RENDERING
Generally, both the CPU and graphics chip need to access the system at the same time, which results in data getting backed up. With deferred rendering data, they don't have to wait for each other, so information flows smoothly.

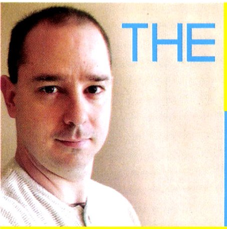
VERTEX AND TEXTURE COMPRESSION
Obviously, graphical information takes up a lot of memory and potentially creates system bottlenecks. Compression limits the amount of bandwidth the graphics use, allowing other bits of data to fit on that crowded freeway.

PARAMETRIC SURFACES
Remember when you'd look at a character model and realize just how horribly blocky it was? Well, if a PSP game uses parametric surfaces, not only does it create a character with a much smoother look, but it also cuts down on the number of polygons used to draw that model, reducing memory and bandwidth requirements.

MORPHING
The PSP's built-in *Terminator 2*–style morphing can be used for a variety of things. *Death, Jr.* uses morphing for objects in the environment, like flowers that wilt on the fly, but developers can also use it for facial animations in cut-scenes or to change a character's structure.

THE WATCHDOG

THE GAMER VOTE



JOHN SCALZI is our man keeping an eye on things for the benefit of all gamers. You can see more of his thoughts on www.scalzi.com.

Ah—election year, when a (not so) young man's mind turns to thoughts of voting. Most of us see ourselves as part of one political voting bloc or another—we're Republicans or Democrats or Libertarians, for example, or conservatives or liberals. Some of us see ourselves as part of a social voting bloc: Generations X or Y, or even baby boomers. And some of us have our blocs defined for us by way of race, religion, or even who we sleep with.

Let me introduce another one: gamers. There are millions of gamers in the United States, a majority of whom, according to most surveys, are above the constitutional voting age of 18; indeed, the median age is in the late 20s. Gamers aren't organized like seniors are with the AARP or gun owners with the NRA; nevertheless, we have our own behaviors and economic clout (videogames form a $10 billion-a-year industry), and our own media (you're reading it). All we're missing is our own lobby to hassle legislators.

Now, gamers wouldn't be very useful as a voting bloc if they didn't have issues that affect all gamers equally. But I think there are a few core issues in which all gamers have a native interest.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION This is an obvious one, and clearly, videogame players are for it, since government censorship impacts the games adult gamers can play (it presents larger constitutional issues as well).

WE HAVE OUR OWN BEHAVIORS AND ECONOMIC CLOUT, AND OUR OWN MEDIA.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE Gamers increasingly play online with friends and recognize that in order to get a truly maximal online gaming experience, the entire country needs to have broadband Internet—a goal that will also benefit citizens on less exciting levels as well.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE If any industry is inherently international, gaming is it, with consoles coming from Japan and the United States and software coming from everywhere. Tariffs and trade restrictions keep gamers from getting games and gadgets.

EDUCATION Games don't come out of thin air, after all; it takes a certain level of education to code, with an emphasis on things like math, science, and technology. Gamers need geeks and thus should vote for policies that will help the next generation of geeks take root here.

You may ask yourself, Isn't it a little silly to vote based on your affinity for videogames? Well, if you were writing in Solid Snake on your ballot, yes. But if what you're doing is looking at the social and political forces that shape the gaming world and then take them into consideration when you vote, then it's not silly at all.

When you're choosing your candidates this year, ask yourself: Is this good for the gamers? If enough of us vote *as* gamers, it's not impossible that eventually politicians will actually listen *to* gamers. «

GOD OF WAR

FROM ARES TO ZEUS, YOUR GUIDE TO GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Who says games aren't educational? *God of War*, the upcoming action game from Sony, draws heavily from Greek mythology. As a nameless Spartan bent on taking out Ares, the god of war, you'll encounter weapons and foes with a decidedly literary origin. If you're persuasive, you may be able to convince your English teacher that playing this game should count as extra credit.

ENEMIES

ARES

The god of war. Known for his good looks, he was also very vain and mean, which is only fitting for someone whose primary responsibility is fighting.

CYCLOPS

A race of giant one-eyed beings, the first Cyclopes were excellent blacksmiths who forged Zeus' thunderbolts for him. The best-known Cyclops was Polyphemus, who had the pleasure of getting his eye gouged out with a burning stake by Odysseus and his men.

MEDUSA

One of three sisters called the gorgons, Medusa used to be a beautiful maiden but then boasted that she was more beautiful than the goddess Athena. Athena got pissed and turned her into an ugly monster with snakes for hair and tusks like a boar. Anyone who saw her face turned instantly to stone.

MINOTAUR

A monster with the body of a man and head and tail of a bull. It ran rampant over the island of Crete until Minos, the king, commissioned an architect to build a maze so complex that the Minotaur would never be able to find its way out. Until Theseus killed the monster nine years later, Minos fed it by sending in seven virgins every year. In mythology, there was just one, but it seems you may face multiple minotaurs in this game.

WEAPONS

MEDUSA'S HEAD

After your battle with Medusa, you get to carry her head around to use as a weapon. A nice side benefit: When the battles are done, set up a business selling all of your vanquished foes as lawn ornaments.

ZEUS' LIGHTNING

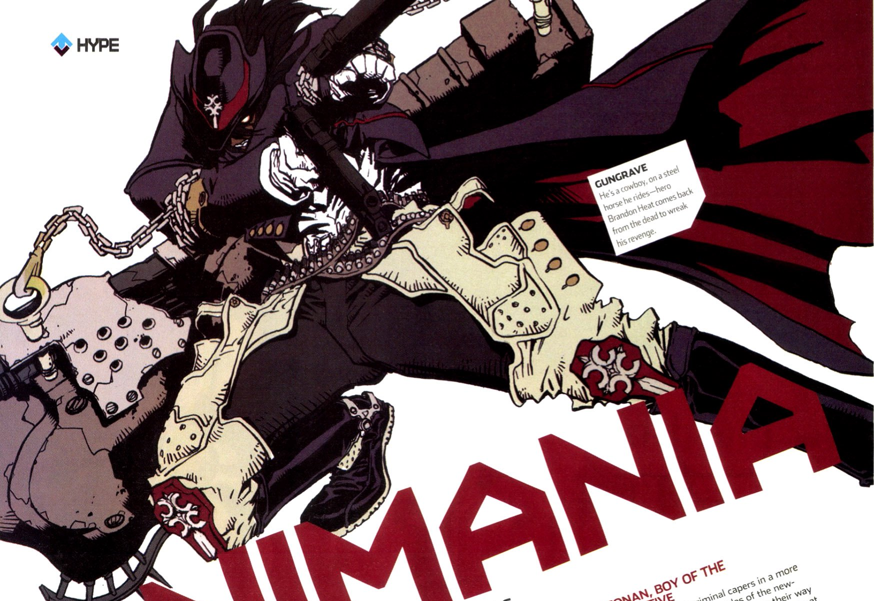
Zeus was the god of heaven and the supreme leader over all the gods. He was fond of throwing lightning bolts at people who pissed him off. Apparently, he's loaned some of them to our protagonist.

ARES' BLADES

While Ares was a mean son of a gun, he wasn't known for his use of any particular weapon. However, being that he's the god of war and all, the blades are probably pretty heavy duty. «

QUEST

In order to defeat your ultimate enemy, you must find Pandora's box. Pandora was the first woman on earth, and was entrusted with a box that she was not to open under any circumstances. However, falling prey to curiosity, she opened the box and found that it was full of evil, which was unleashed into the entire world. Apparently, women have been nosy since the beginning of time.



GUNGRAVE
He's a cowboy, on a steel horse he rides—hero Brandon Heat comes back from the dead to wreak his revenge.

ANIMANIA

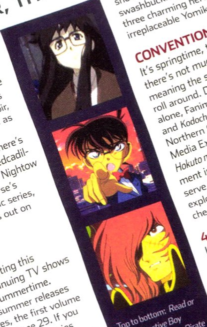
THE GRAVE, THE PAPER, THE LEETLE GRAY CELLS

GUNS, LOTS OF GUNS

If you found the setting in Sega's *Gungrave* compelling, Geneon Entertainment has something right up your alley for this summer. The first volume of the *Gungrave* TV series arrives on DVD on July 6, with the same mix of noir, Gothic excess, and intense ballistic overkill as the game. The TV show lacks the PS2 sequel's hilarious supporting cast, but there's always room to bring in Rocket Billy Redcadillac if it runs another season. Yasuhiro Nightow fans may also want to grab Dark Horse's translation of his second *Trigun* comic series, *Trigun Maximum*—volume one comes out on May 19.

READ OR DREAM

There aren't many series debuting this spring—we'll mostly see continuing TV shows and OVA releases until the summertime. Geneon will kick off its big summer releases with the *Read or Die* TV series, the first volume of which should arrive on June 29. If you liked the three-part OVA series (and it seems almost everyone did), the TV show has 26 episodes of the same swashbuckling paper-powered action, with three charming heroines to replace the nigh-irreplaceable Yomiko Readman.



Top to bottom: *Read or Die*, *Detective Boy Conan*, and *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

It's springtime, the weather is turning, and there's not much new anime coming out, meaning the summer con season is about to roll around. During the last weekend of May alone, Fanime Con (with shoujo ace You Higuri and *Kodocha*'s Hajime Watanabe) will be held in Northern California (San Jose), the Pacific Media Expo will be held in Southern California, *Hokuto no Ken*'s Akira Kamiya will hit Animazement in North Carolina, and Anime North will serve Torontonian fans. 2004 will see an explosion in regional anime conventions, so check your local news.

4:50 FROM KASUMIGASEKI

In another of the Japanese animation industry's intermittent efforts to expose its fans to fine literature, the NHK network has a new mystery series due to debut this July. *Agatha Christie's Great Detectives Poirot and Marple* is exactly that, an animated chronicle of Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple's exploits in drawing-room deduction. One would normally consider an American release out of the question, but with *Sherlock Hound* available in English, anything is possible.

CONAN, BOY OF THE DETECTIVE

If you prefer your criminal capers in a more modern style, all 52 episodes of the new-school hit *Detective Boy Conan* are on their way to the Cartoon Network. The show debuts at midnight (curious scheduling for something completely G-rated) on June 7, kicking off the adventures of the youthful crime solver Conan. He's not as young as he looks (his foes reverse-aged him from late-teens bishonen heartthrob to a toddler in short pants), but his wit and deductive abilities remain thoroughly entertaining. Meanwhile, Tokyopop's *Rave Master* will hit television a month earlier on May 1.

OH EXPENSIVE, IMPORTED SEA OF STARS

If some American anime company wants to give a gift to the most dedicated of fans, it'll translate the upcoming Japanese DVD box of the classic *Space Pirate Captain Harlock* TV series. This isn't the new *Captain Herlock* series—it's 42 episodes of the pirate captain's legendary '70s-vintage exploits, plus the *Mystery of the Arcadia* TV movie. Toei will release the six-disc set in Japan on July 21 for a little under $400—any takers? Anyone? Please? «

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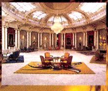
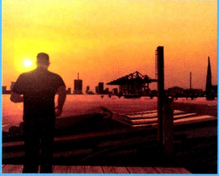
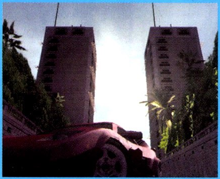


$29,071.83
What a top-of-the-line trip to Miami, Nice, and Istanbul would cost. Price includes first-class airfare for two originating in New York City, plus five-star accommodations for a week in each city. A room in Nice's Hotel Negresco, pictured above, goes for a mere $645.63 per night.

MIAMI

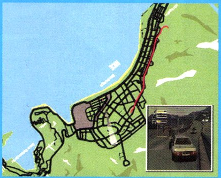
It's fun in the sun when you're on the *DRIV3R* tour! Bask in the warmth and sophistication of the most laid-back city in America from your personal bungalow—an exclusive beachfront property of ours, complete with private mooring and parking space. Catch football fever at the Orange Bowl or cruise the local nightlife on your exotic sports bike—the choice is yours. And should your business take you offshore, we've got a turbocharged cigarette boat that will make you feel like king of the sea. The ocean is perfect for swimming, too (or ditching stolen cars), so come on in...the water's fine!





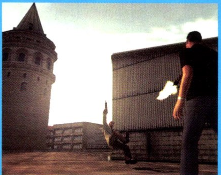
NICE

Europe—it's the quintessential summer vacation, and Nice is sizzling! Located in the heart of the French Riviera, Nice is a town of broad palm-fringed avenues and grand hotels, of azure-blue skies and golden sunshine, of beaches and fine museums. The spectacular Promenade des Anglais curves along the seafront for nearly four miles, offering spectacular views as you swerve through midday traffic. If you're trying to avoid the local gendarmes, try climbing the twisty roads to Nice's summit, where you'll find a spectacular view of the city and a helpful rooftop escape route.



ISTANBUL

Exotic Istanbul is calling—dare you answer? Straddling the historic Bosphorus, this link between Europe and Asia is one of the last truly romantic cities on earth. Marvel at the Saint Sophia church, swing past the ominous Topkapi Palace, or waste away the afternoon exploring the laundry-lined alleyways of the old city. Traffic getting you down? Then borrow an articulated truck from a friendly city dweller (don't forget to say *tesekkur ederim!*) and use it to plow through anything in your way. It's the perfect antidote to Istanbul's notoriously dishonest taxi drivers!



★★★★ "Ever wish you had a keyboard handy, just for online chats? Here's your solution."
iType2, Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, January 2004

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NYKO
INNOVATION FIRST

SMUT

SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN SAYS THAT THE ESRB HAS THE "BEST ENTERTAINMENT RATING SYSTEM" IN THE UNITED STATES

Just down the hall from the *Half-Life* poster and the withering potted plant, havoc is unleashed. Bullets fly. Blood flows. Bosoms heave. Heads roll. Mayhem ensues.

This is the stuff of the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, the group that rates the videogames you play. Every year, all your favorite games make their way into this modest office on Manhattan's East Side, where they're given the once-over prior to release.

But don't come here expecting to get a sneak peek of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. As I learn during a rare visit to mission control, the ESRB is tighter and quieter than Area 51. And just as controversial.

"Sorry, you can't go back there," says Patricia Vance, president of the ESRB, as we make our way from the lobby past posters of Tiger Woods and brochures of happy kids, tongues wagging as they play their videogames. The place we can't go to is a tiny room at the end of the hall, where, at this moment, some undisclosed games from some undisclosed companies are being rated. One thing you're guaranteed when you're a professional rater, we're told, is your privacy.

And with good reason. Videogame ratings are under fire like never before.

The ESRB has been rating videogames since 1994, when the industry created the group in response to threats of governmental regulation. Today, game publishers send in their products for voluntary ratings, which include E for Everyone, T for Teen, and M for Mature. Lately, however, sparks have been flying.

In February, Harvard University issued a study titled "Content and Ratings of Teen-Rated Video Games," which found that almost half of the games looked at included content that was not listed on their boxes. And in Washington State, legislators are trying to ban the sale of M-rated games to anyone under the age of 17. The game industry is fighting this on the grounds that such a law would be a violation of free speech. How's that for something gruesome?

NOT RATED BY GAMERS

Deciding whether *Siren* gets slapped with an M rating or a T isn't easy, we found out. It all starts with the raters: a pool of 50 Americans from all walks of life—teachers, doctors, single moms—ranging in age from 21 to 65. The ESRB places ads in parenting magazines and gets swamped with about 1,000 applications per year. Gameplaying experience is not required. "They definitely don't have to be gamers," Vance says.

Here's why: When a company sends in a game to be rated, it's not actually sending in playable demos—it's just sending in video footage. Publishers are required to send in what Vance calls "the most extreme footage" of a game, usually two or three months prior to a game's release. If a publisher doesn't send in the extreme stuff, it will have to face "serious consequences." Everything the raters see of a game is supplied by the publisher as video footage, and the raters never actually play games as part of the rating process.

Depending on the amount of blood and guts or exposed boobs, the extreme footage can last anywhere from 20 minutes to three hours, Vance says. Once the footage for, say, *Ribbit King* arrives, the dirty work begins. Two or three raters come to the office to check out the game and complete some on-the-fly microanalyses.

DEPENDING ON THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD AND GUTS OR EXPOSED BOOBS, THE EXTREME FOOTAGE CAN LAST ANYWHERE FROM 20 MINUTES TO THREE HOURS.

As they watch the footage, there's a frame count rattling off onscreen. The raters have a guide to content that should be flagged—such content ranges from gambling and sexuality to violence and destruction. Every time raters see a bit of gore or postmortem damage, they pause the game and take note. "There's no formula," Vance says. "We want raters to use their own judgment." Once the raters review a game, the team looks to see if there's consensus on the evaluation—Vance says there almost always is—and the game gets rated accordingly.

The fun doesn't end there. If a game publisher balks at the rating, it can lower the body count of the game, for example, and reapply. But that's seldom the case, says Vance. In fact, only 10 percent of games get an M rating; the vast majority, nearly 60 percent, are rated E.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

But, as the Harvard study notes, sometimes gore or smut is in the eye of the beholder. And this problem is compounded by the increasingly unpredictable world of online play, where users can affect a game's content. The ESRB has done its best to respond by including a note on boxes for games such as *Final Fantasy XI* and *Champions of Norrath*, which states: "Game experience may change during online play." As the controversy rages on and on, Vance says, the ultimate responsibility resides with the players and parents who buy the games in the first place.

"If a rating doesn't give you pause, that's not our problem," says Vance. "We can't dictate morals or ethics. People make up their own minds." « *David Kushner*

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E-M

CONTENT RATED BY

ESRB

WHAT IS THE ESRB?

According to www.esrb.com, "The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a self-regulatory body for the interactive entertainment software industry established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), formerly the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA). ESRB independently applies and enforces ratings, advertising guidelines, and online privacy principles adopted by the computer and videogame industry. To date, the ESRB has rated more than 10,000 titles submitted by over 350 publishers."

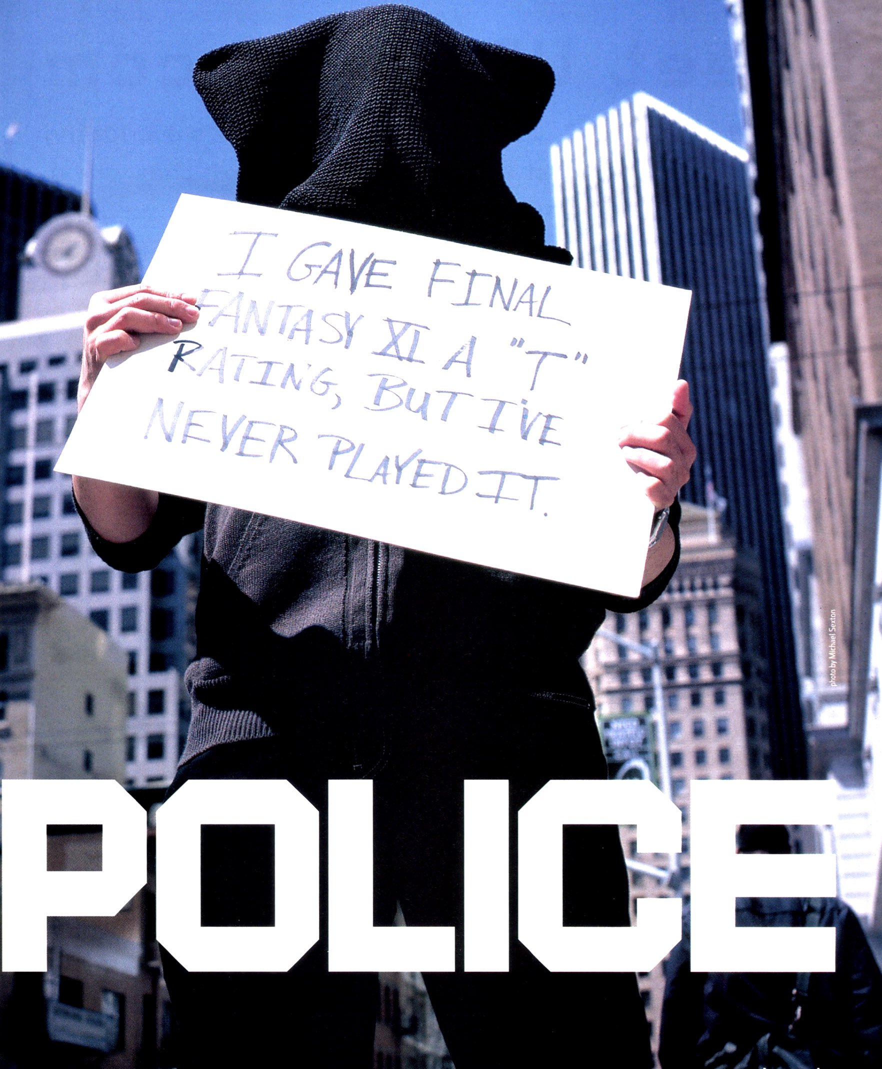
MOSTLY FOR EVERYONE

57%
of all games rated in 2003 received an E rating.

32%
of all games rated in 2003 received a T rating.

10%
of all games rated in 2003 received an M rating.

1%
of all games rated in 2003 received an EC rating.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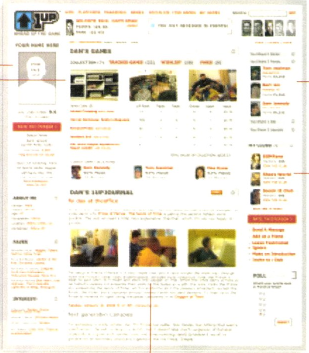
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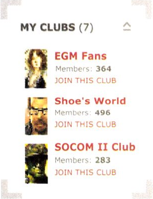
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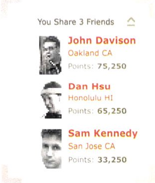
You Share 3 Friends

John Davison
Oakland CA
Points: **75,250**

Dan Hsu
Honolulu HI
Points: **65,250**

Sam Kennedy
San Jose CA
Points: **33,250**

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DAN'S 1UP JOURNAL

My day at the office

YOUR JOURNAL

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PLAY THE DEMO!

CHECK YOUR HEAD
You get two levels and a hysterically addictive practice room in the *Psi-Ops* demo this month. We've got two words for you: soldier bowling. You'll understand when you play it.

PSI-OPS POWERS YOU UP WITH SIX NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN WEAPONS—BUT THEY'RE ALL IN YOUR HEAD

PSI-OPS

THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

TELEKINESIS

Moving things with your mind is something most of us only dream of. But in *Psi-Ops*, you can pick up anything that isn't nailed down—including enemies—using only the power of your mind. Even better: You can stand on top of most objects, levitate them, and fly yourself around, Magneto style. **ADVANCED TECHNIQUE:** Pick up an enemy with your brain and shoot him with your rifle. Then throw him at someone else.

STAR GATE
This research project, which was sponsored by the U.S. government for 24 years, tried to prove that remote viewing, the ability to perceive distant events, was a viable method for spying on enemy nations.

PYROKINESIS

You're a hunk of burning love. Why not share that love with enemies, wooden boxes, and anything else that will burn merrily in the night? A quick button tap sends a blast of flame across the room, setting fire to anything in its path. Then, of course, once those things come in contact with *other* flammable objects...well, you get the idea. **ADVANCED TECHNIQUE:** Ignite an enemy, pick him up, and throw him into a group of his friends.

MIND CONTROL

POSSESSION: It's not just for Linda Blair anymore! You can send your spirit forth to invade the minds of your enemies, taking full control of their bodies for as long as your Psi meter holds out. Try attacking other enemies and watch the sparks fly! Or heck, just jump off a tall building. **ADVANCED TECHNIQUE:** This isn't in the demo, but Midway says you'll be able to make a possessee turn his gun on himself in the final game.

REMOTE VIEWING

A sneak preview of what's ahead is always useful when the odds are stacked against you. This power lets you detach your sight from your body and roam freely throughout your environment—even through closed doors. You can spy on enemies, find hidden items, and figure out the best path from point A to point B. **ADVANCED TECHNIQUE:** Just for fun, try getting inside an enemy's head—for real.

MIND DRAIN

Mmmm, brain juice. Just what every psychic commando needs. This ability allows you to refill your Psi meter by walking up to any dead body and draining its mental powers. It also serves as a pretty nasty stealth kill: If you creep up behind an enemy undetected, you can suck his brain to your heart's content, without all the messy shooting. **ADVANCED TECHNIQUE:** Levitate an enemy, then "catch" him with the mind drain. Satisfying!

AURA VIEW

It's not quite a Spidey sense, but this ability will provide you with clues and information that aren't visible to the naked eye. Midway is keeping this last ability under a pretty tight lid, so all we can do is speculate. We're guessing it's going to work something like Wolverine's smell-o-vision in *X2: Wolverine's Revenge*. You know, where you see footprints and heat signatures and that sort of thing. But really, that's just a guess. «

SECOND SIGHT

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR FREE RADICAL PRESIDENT DAVID DOAK

You know Free Radical. Founded by former members of Rare (*GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark*), the studio launched *TimeSplitters* in 2000. Now the folks behind the cartoony FPS series are entering a more serious genre with a hook that's beginning to look like the next big trend: a psychic hero.

OPM What lessons about launching a new product did you learn from *TimeSplitters*?

DAVID DOAK That it's hard work and your game had better be good. It's a fact of life now: Sequels and film licenses dominate the release schedules, and it is increasingly difficult to find funding for original projects. We're hoping to make *Second Sight* an example of the excellence that can be achieved with a new idea.

OPM Memory loss is starting to become a bit of a trend. What is it about memory loss as a plot device that appeals to you?

DD Sorry, what was the question again? I think that memory loss is often just used as a convenient starting point; the main character's amnesia can be used as an excuse for the intrusive "filling in the background." But John Vattic's memory loss in *Second Sight* is really much more than that—think more along the lines of the film *Memento*, where revelations are always pushing along the action and causing the viewers to reevaluate what they think may have happened.

OPM Psychic powers, in principle, are pretty awesome. What sort of limitations did you run into when trying to implement them?

DD The biggest challenge is taking something that is fairly abstract and giving it visual appeal, then making it work and play well in a game environment. Implementing telekinesis, for example, meant tackling in-game physics in a much bigger way than we originally envisioned. Every time we made the telekinesis better, it opened up new possibilities.

Mind reading is one thing we decided to pass on just because it didn't scream "fun" at us—so there's no sitting in a dark room, drawing bad pictures of some image that a "sender" is projecting. Hopefully, people will thank us for that. Oh, and you can't bend spoons, either.

OPM Where do you see action games going in the future?

DD More "movie in a box" film tie-ins, which increasingly are more like watching a DVD than playing a game.

OPM Where do you *want* to see action games go in the future?

DD Originality, risk taking, innovation. A recognition that game-development talent can create an exciting, original product. But the mass market prefers the "movie in a box." «

MENTAL GEAR SOLID

David Doak describes John Vattic's five powers.

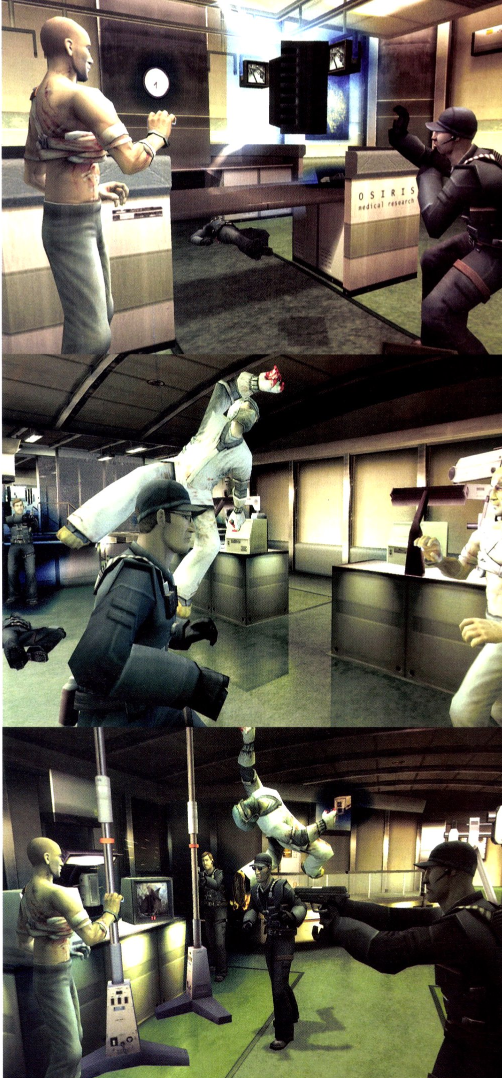
TELEKINESIS
"Manipulate objects without touching them. Scare the hell out of the janitor. Hurl explosive objects at enemies. Grab enemies and give them the Peter Pan experience—although I'm pretty sure Peter Pan never flew through plate glass windows."

HEALING
"Overcome enormous odds and recover from fatal damage."

PSYCHIC ATTACK
"Powerful blasts of psychic energy that send people flying—the psychic equivalent of a shotgun."

CHARM
"Misdirect enemies with the power of your mind, sneak past impossible situations—it's like hyperstealth."

PROJECTION
"Recon the area ahead, remotely activate switches, or even possess and control enemies. Make them shoot their friends."



FROM JAPAN

Every month, we write about goofy games from Japan that would never fly here in North America. Occasionally, though, things that seem too Japanese manage to make it to the States anyway.

XENOSAGA EPISODE II
JENSEITS VON GUT UND BOSE

We've known for a while now that *Xenosaga Episode II* is getting a Stateside release. We got in touch with the ever-elusive Monolith Software team, and it gave us fragments of hints about what's next. Storywise, *Episode II* starts moments after *Episode I* (the characters leave for Second Miltia at the end of *I*, and *II* picks up when they arrive). The only other plot revelation Monolith Soft was willing to concede was that aspects of Jr.'s, Albedo's, and Gaignun's pasts will be revealed. The team claims to have trimmed the cut-scenes and added more gameplay thanks to fan feedback. Monolith Soft is also using the load screens as an area to recap the story, so people can follow the weird plot a bit more easily.

Publisher Namco **Developer** Monolith Software **Out** Fall

SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: NOCTURNE

You might look at this heavily tattooed, cel-shaded kid punching demons in the face and figure that he's from some sort of *Akira*-esque action game. But no, the crazily titled *Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne* is actually an RPG by the same team that made the *Persona* franchise. So besides getting the requisite oddball story (this time involving a demon apocalypse called the Conception), you can also talk enemies into joining your party. Another nutty element is the weird intergame crossover when Dante (yes, Mr. *Devil May Cry*) shows up in the game. Not content with a glorified cameo, Dante will either hunt you down (you're part demon, after all) or fight alongside you (if you choose to be a good fellow).

Publisher Atlus **Developer** Atlus **Out** August

CAPCOM RECYCLES!

Capcom has no qualms about having intergame crossovers itself. Aside from non-Capcom games like *Soul Calibur II* or *Super Smash Bros.*, Capcom's fighting games are king of using characters from other games.

Hole 1
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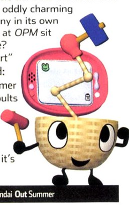
50
RANGE 28.8M

RIBBIT KING



While it's nothing at all like the other two RPGs on this page, the oddly charming *Ribbit King* is plenty zany in its own way. Why did everyone at *OPM* sit down to play this game? Because frolf (the "sport" of *RK*) is utterly absurd: You use a custom hammer to hit a lever that catapults a frog across an immense golf course. It's wacky, it's easy to pick up, and it's irresistibly Japanese—and it's coming here!

Publisher Bandai **Developer** Bandai **Out** Summer

JAPAN TOWN
THE VIEW FROM OVER THERE

ANDREW VESTAL currently resides in Japan, where he teaches English. You can check out more of his videogame knowledge at www.1UP.com

What's the major difference between the Japanese market and the U.S. market? That's easy: The Japanese market has a *lot* more crap. Major publishers such as Sega, Capcom, Konami, and Square Enix are based in Japan, and the games that these companies release in America are only a small fraction of their total output. In 2003, for example, Konami published more than 100 titles in Japan. Larger publishers often use Japan as a test bed, sending out cheap and expensive games and seeing what sticks.

Another firewall between Japan and America is Sony itself: Sony Computer Entertainment America's approval policies are stricter than the Japanese branch's. Generally speaking, U.S. retailers only get high-budget titles and breakout successes; in contrast, the shelves of Japanese game stores will be haunted forever by unbought copies of *Racing Lagoon*, Square's "driving RPG."

Although the U.S. game market remains healthy, a faltering Japanese economy has seen its market share contract. Many small developers have left the industry entirely, choosing now to design simple, downloadable cell-phone games or pachinko machines. The small outfits that remain soldier on as best they can. Some throw all their resources into a single yearly release, often in a semipopular series. Other developers have dedicated themselves to filling a less-intensive niche still enjoyed by some players. These games include pet-raising adventures, hex-based military simulations, and sound novels (text with music). They also include horrifying, fetish-targeting dating simulators, or "gal games." Recently, picking up a box to show a friend in disgust, I said, "God, they're all 14." Not true: One was 12. Rest assured that Japanese fans of these games are as ostracized as their American counterpervs.

And then you have anime-licensed titles. Sometimes it seems like half the games available are based on robots, cute girls, and the occasional cute robot girls. Most licensed games are as dire as their U.S. movie-based counterparts, offering only minimal gameplay and counting on brand recognition and unblinking fanboyism for success. There's a popular myth that the Japanese gamer has impeccable taste, playing only the finest, most original titles while eschewing shovelware crap. If only.

THE JAPANESE MARKET HAS A LOT MORE CRAP.

On a positive note, Japan's lower barriers for publishing mean we see games unlikely to be given a green light in the U.S. *Katamari Damashii*, for example, is a game in which the player pushes a sticky ball around a suburban environment, gathering up anything in its path and growing the ball from a miniscule 10 centimeters to nearly a full kilometer. Deceivingly simple and fiendishly addictive, the game has been selling slowly but steadily thanks to strong word of mouth since its debut. «

Clockwise from left: David Arquette channels a lounge singer; Eric McCormack sends this one out to all the lovely ladies; Courteney Cox looks underwhelmed by her husband's singing abilities; Neal McDonough and wife Ruve Robertson get romantic.

OPEN MIC NIGHT

NOTHING HELPS THE KIDS LIKE A LITTLE KARAOKE

On March 10, the stars showed up at the Ivar in Hollywood to benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. And as if helping out such a worthwhile charity wasn't enough (the general public was admitted at $50 a ticket), there was one other big draw: *Karaoke Revolution*!

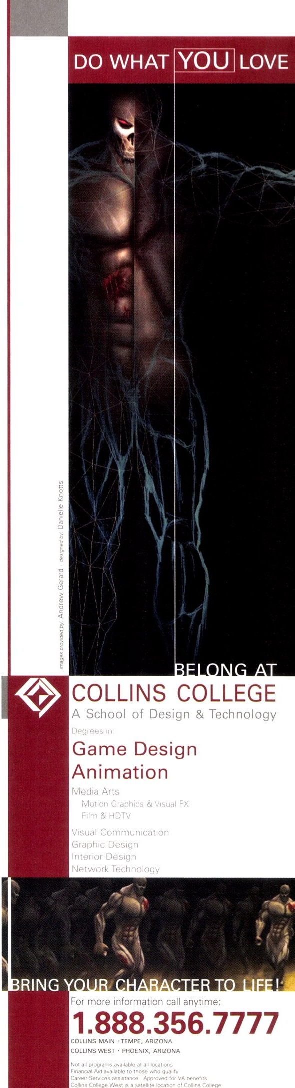
Celebrities like actor Eric McCormack, comedian Wayne Brady, and Playmate Brande Roderick grabbed the mic to sing (and sometimes butcher) songs found in the game or on the bar's own list of karaoke tracks. Singer/songwriter Ben Harper brought the house down with his rendition of Prince's "Purple Rain" as his girlfriend, Laura Dern, looked on. Other attending celebs included Rose McGowan, Christian Slater, Tia Carrere, Traci Bingham, Matthew Perry, and a very pregnant Courteney Cox.

Joining Cox was husband David Arquette, who personally worked with Konami to organize the event. "I have always admired the work that the Elizabeth Glaser Foundation has done in the fight against AIDS and the approach they take in making the children and families dealing with the effects of AIDS feel normal and loved," says the actor. "The karaoke event seemed like a wonderful way to help in a fun, inviting surrounding. Konami was the perfect choice as a sponsor because of their new karaoke game and their willingness to help a wonderful charity. I could definitely see this event happening every year, and I hope Konami can be there as well." «

CROWD
my-
self
in

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

Get those USB headsets ready! Konami plans to release *Karaoke Revolution Volume 2* this July with a new medley mode, in which you sing five shortened versions of the game's 35 fresh songs in direct succession. So far, Konami has only confirmed the additions of "I Will Survive," "Every Breath You Take," "Heartbreak Hotel," and "Friends in Low Places"—but expect lots of newer stuff in there, too.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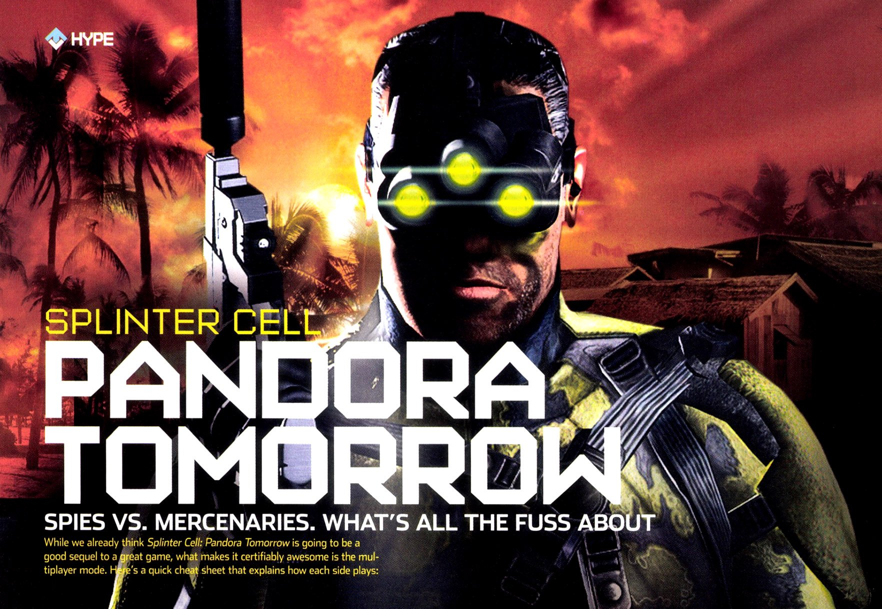
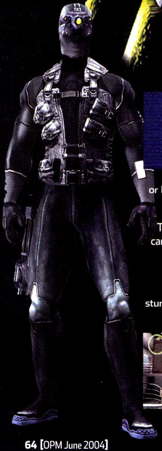


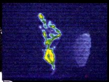
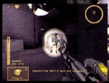
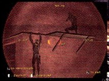
SPLINTER CELL

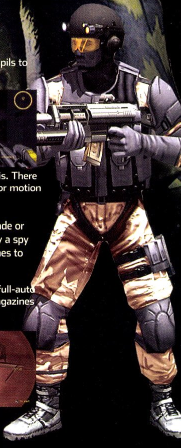
PANDORA TOMORROW

SPIES VS. MERCENARIES. WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT

While we already think *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* is going to be a good sequel to a great game, what makes it certifiably awesome is the multiplayer mode. Here's a quick cheat sheet that explains how each side plays:



SPIES		MERCENARIES
To either steal, sabotage, or destroy ND133 canisters.	GOAL	To protect ND133 canisters and take down all of the spies.
Can sneak around, climb everywhere, and perform all of Sam Fisher's acrobatic tricks.	PHYSICAL	Can run and gun, as well as adapt their pupils to dark rooms.
 Both thermal and night vision let you see your surroundings and any potential hazards very easily.	SIGHT	Motion tracking highlights any movement, and electromagnetic tracking focuses on anyone using a gadget. 
Noise emitters for faking out mercenary gear or both chaff and flashbang grenades for making quick disappearances when caught.	EVASION/ DETECTION	Laser trip wires that indicate where a spy is. There are also mines that work via either lasers or motion sensors; they detonate only on spies.
Tag a mercenary with a spy bullet, and not only can you spot him on your radar, but you can also listen to his conversations. Or just use sticky cameras in choice spots.	TRACKING	Either tag a spy with a phosphorous grenade or use your gun's laser sight to easily identify a spy among friends and shadows. If worse comes to worst, you can turn on your headlamp.
Nonlethal sticky shockers, which electrically stun the mercenaries (leaving them open to choke holds) and recharge automatically.	WEAPON	Assault rifles with single shot, burst, and full-auto settings. They start with five 30-bullet magazines and restock at special reloading zones.
Grabbing a mercenary in a choke hold, whispering sweet nothings into his headset, and then knocking him out.	BEST MOMENT	Looking out a window and catching a spy attempting to be sneaky by chance, then ending his turn in the game with a simple burst of gunfire. 



RUMORS

RUMORED TO BE THE MOST RELIABLE PLAYSTATION RUMOR COLUMN IN THE WORLD

GRAND THEFT AUTO POCKET

The PSP development system allows teams to make use of a version of Criterion's RenderWare middleware solution. RenderWare represents the guts of many of our very favorite games, including *GTA3* and *Vice City*. This, as you could imagine, opens up some interesting possibilities for a PSP version of either of these games, or even a completely new game in the franchise for the system. The RenderWare revelation also prompts suspicions that there are many possibilities for the coming months: a *Burnout* game, a version of Midway's excellent *NBA Ballers, kill.switch, Headhunter, Sonic Heroes,* the list goes on and on. One in four PS2 games uses some form of RenderWare technology, which bodes well for PSP.

NEED FOR SPEED

NEED FOR EVEN MORE SPEED

During our pokings and proddings of various EA talent while piecing together this month's cover story, we got the distinct impression that *Underground 2* is not the only *Need for Speed* game currently in development. We previously reported that there may be a broader title in the works, and further evidence of this was provided when EA registered the domain www.needforspeedmostwanted.com. Aside from being a ludicrously long URL, this leads us to believe that the rumored "every kind of car you can imagine from tuners to exotics" concept is still alive and kicking and may be revealed later this year.

TAKAYOSHI SATO

GOLDENEYE 2 IS A LAME IDEA

Actually, that headline's not a rumor, it's true. What is rumored is that the concept hasn't fared too well in focus tests lately, and as a result, the development team is rethinking the "you're Bond villains who fight one another for some reason" concept. How about this, guys? Take the name you've chosen seriously, spend some time playing the original, and then just make a sequel.

In other *Bond* news, we've heard that ex–*Silent Hill* man and leather-pants–wearing rock star dev guy Takayoshi Sato is involved in some kind of *Bond* project at EA, along with Dan Orzulak, a similarly well-credentialed designer from the *Halo* team. Whether their project is *GoldenEye 2* or the rumored *Best of Bond* game featuring classic scenes from all the Bond movies is unknown.

We thought *Everything or Nothing* was pretty good. Why don't they do another game like that? We like guns, explosions, and hot chicks, and *EON* is more than adequately endowed in all of those departments.

RAZIEL

NEW KAIN, EVENTUALLY

Defiance is far from the greatest game ever made, and it performed as well as you'd expect for something that scored 2.5 stars and was released in an overcrowded holiday season. There is another game coming, but it's going to be very different. Crystal Dynamics isn't developing it, and it'll focus primarily on Raziel, so there'll be none of that messing around hopping between two characters. We've also heard that the story will be "more contemporary." Our bet? Raziel goes all *Spawn* on our collective asses and nails bad guys in a modern-day setting. «

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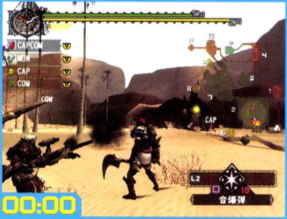

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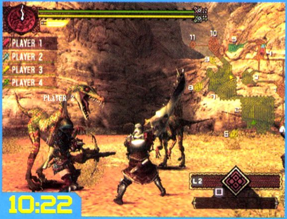

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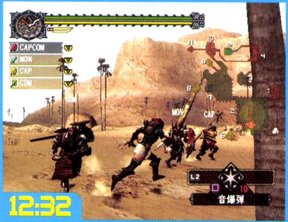

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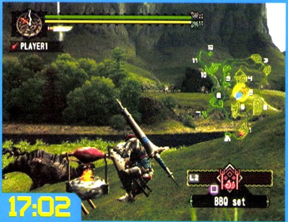

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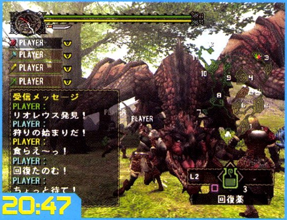

受信メッセージ
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リオレウス発見！
PLAYER：
狩りの始まりだ！
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食らえ〜っ！
PLAYER：
回復たのむ！
PLAYER：
ちょっと待て！

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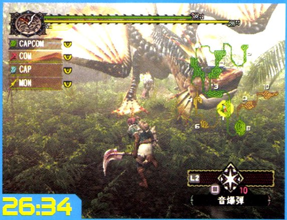

26:34

Four editors hooked up for an online session of *Monster Hunter*. Team Ziff consisted of Scooter the bowgunner, Milky (from *GMR*) the broadsword swinger, Nich "Lance" Maragos (from 1UP), and Mark "the Hammer" MacDonald (from *EGM*)—here's the rundown of their 30-minute session.

00:00 Team Ziff accepts a quest to steal a wyvern egg and gets acquainted with the game's basic controls: left analog to move, right analog to attack, buttons for inventory items, D-pad for camera control. Scooter and crew take their time looking around the town, noting the blue chest that is stocked full of spare goodies. Scooter grabs some meat and bullets and notices that everyone has already left.

04:42 The crew notices some harmless dino-cows grazing in the fields. While Team Ziff moves ahead, Scooter practices using the L1 and R1 triggers to go into first-person or third-person aiming and starts shooting dino-cows at random.

06:03 After every kill, Scooter stops to harvest meat and bones with a press of the O. He finally moves forward, only to see everyone else attacking some aggressive monsters called velociprey.

10:22 Milky swings his massive sword like a drunk, delivering heavy damage with each blow. Nich's lance lets him attack while holding his shield up, and Mark's hammer deals the most damage. Scooter sits in the background, shooting at everything, including his team.

12:32 Scooter shoots Milky while Milky bats Scooter around. Hilarity ensues. They eventually move on.

13:49 The team finally gets to the wyvern nest and spies the egg they have to steal. Everyone uses their keyboards to coordinate their strategy: Nich loses at the pretend game of drawing straws and is tasked with carrying the egg, leaving everyone else to defend him.

SCOOTER KEEPS MAKING EITHER BURNED OR RARE STEAKS.

17:02 Since carrying the egg requires lots of stamina, Nich sits down and cooks some meat on the barbecue. He times it correctly to create a well-done steak, which replenishes tons of stamina. Scooter keeps making either burned or rare steaks, which affect his stamina differently.

20:47 The wyvern makes an appearance. Milky drops a pit trap to slow it down while Nich waddles toward town with the egg. Scooter attempts to be useful by unloading cluster shots, pellet shots, and other types of bullets on the wyvern. Mark actually makes himself useful by laying down barrel bombs, and Milky swings madly at the wyvern.

26:34 Scooter dies and gets his body carted back to town by the cat people.

30:00 By the time Scooter gets his gear together to leave town, Nich's brought the egg back. Success! After getting its monetary reward, Team Ziff gets ready to accept another quest. «

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AREA 51

SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE IS OUR PRIMARY GOAL

Area 51 isn't your normal everyday research facility. So when the people running it call for a hazmat team to "clean up a biological infestation," don't expect a bunch of guys in beekeeper outfits and hoses. What does it take to be a hazmat agent in the game world of *Area 51*? Check out a page from the operations handbook.

THE MOMENT SOMEONE STARTS ACTING UP, PUT HIM DOWN—TRUST NO ONE.

YOUR SUIT: LEARN IT, LOVE IT, LIVE IN IT

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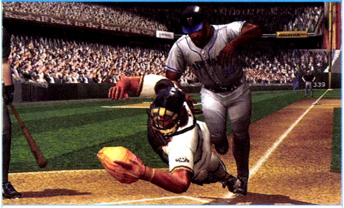
While you're always given an inoculum, it's not 100 percent guaranteed. Due to new strains we haven't anticipated, getting bitten could mean that you temporarily exhibit extraordinary powers such as the ability to see through walls or preternatural strength. But any such benefits come with negative side effects—for example, some infected claim to hear alien voices speaking through corpses. Be warned.

BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

PS2 TOP 20 SALES

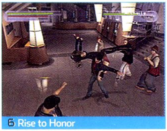
With baseball in full swing, we're spending extra time hunkered down around our PlayStation 2s, re-creating every MLB game online instead of watching any of them live. But we miss the hot dogs.



Albert Pujols reigns supreme as *MVP 2004* comes out on top.

	Title (Publisher)	
1	MVP Baseball 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
2	Final Fantasy XI with HDD (Square Enix)	●●●●●
3	Drakengard (Square Enix U.S.A.)	●●
4	James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing (EA)	●●●●◖
5	The Suffering (Midway)	●●●
6	Rise to Honor (SCEA)	●●●
7	MX Unleashed (THQ)	●●●●
8	Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest (SOE)	●●●●◖
9	Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm (Ubisoft)	●●●●
10	Need for Speed Underground (EA)	●●●●◖
11	NCAA March Madness 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●
12	MLB 2005 (SCEA)	●●●◖
13	Mafia (Gathering)	●●●◖
14	Corvette (Global Star)	●●●◖
15	World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 International (Konami)	●●●●●
16	Rainbow Six 3 (Ubisoft)	●●●●
17	NFL Street (EA Big)	●●●●◖
18	NBA Live 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
19	Sonic Heroes (Sega)	●●
20	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II (Interplay)	●●●◖

2 Final Fantasy XI



6 Rise to Honor

7 MX Unleashed

19 Sonic Heroes

Source: EB Games, March 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. Need for Speed sources: Guinness World Records, Bugatti website.

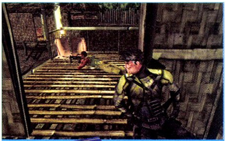
PS1 TOP 10 SALES

1	Final Fantasy VII	Square Enix
2	Final Fantasy VIII	Square Enix
3	Final Fantasy Tactics	Square Enix
4	Final Fantasy IX	Square Enix
5	Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix
6	Chrono Cross	Square Enix
7	Namco Museum Vol. 3	Namco
8	Namco Museum Vol. 1	Namco
9	Elmo's Numbers & Letters	New Kid Co
10	Crash Bash	SCEA

おおきづちが あらわれた！
せみもぐらが あらわれた！

JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	Dragon Quest V	Square Enix
2	Dragon Warriors 4: Empires	Koei
3	Monster Hunter	Capcom
4	Armored Core Nexus	From Software
5	Sakura Taisen Monogatari	Sega
6	Netchu! Pro Baseball 2004	Square
7	Pro Baseball Spirits 2004	Konami
8	Onimusha 3	Capcom
9	Katamari Damashii	Namco
10	Popolocrois: The Law of the Moon	SCE



TOP 10 BLOCKBUSTER RENTALS

1	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (XB)	Ubisoft
2	Rainbow Six 3 (PS2)	Ubisoft
3	Rise to Honor (PS2)	SCEA
4	James Bond: EON (PS2)	EA
5	Mafia (PS2)	Gathering
6	NFL Street (PS2)	EA Big
7	Mafia (XB)	Gathering
8	Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm (PS2)	Ubisoft
9	The Suffering (PS2)	Midway
10	Ninja Gaiden (XB)	Tecmo

TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Ninja Gaiden (XB)	Tecmo
2	MVP Baseball 2004 (PS2)	EA Sports
3	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (XB)	Ubisoft
4	Pokémon Colosseum (GC)	Nintendo
5	Battlefield Vietnam (PC)	EA
6	Unreal Tournament 2004 (PC)	Atari
7	Final Fantasy XI w/ HDD (PS2)	Square Enix
8	Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes (GC)	Konami
9	MVP Baseball 2004 (XB)	EA Sports
10	Harvest Moon (GC)	Natsume

TREND SPOTTER

A lot of game companies are banking on the third time being the charm. Will they be lucky? Or will it be another case of three strikes and you're out? (Sorry, Mr. Lucas.)

Jak 3

Ratchet & Clank 3

DRIV3R

Onimusha 3

Star Wars Episode III

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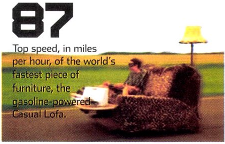
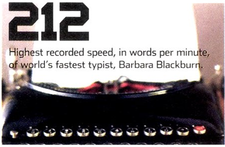
Numbers about the fast and the furious.



87

Top speed, in miles per hour, of the world's fastest piece of furniture, the gasoline-powered Casual Lofa.



212

Highest recorded speed, in words per minute, of world's fastest typist, Barbara Blackburn.

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Sticker price (in U.S. dollars) of the world's fastest production road car, the Bugatti Veyron, which has a top speed of 253 mph.

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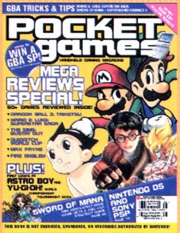
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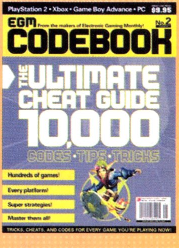
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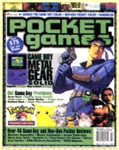

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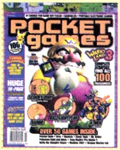

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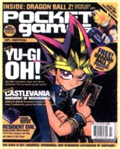

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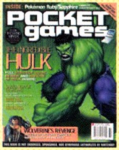

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GOING UNDER-GROUND AGAIN

AN EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK AT NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

- JOHN DAVISON

When *Need for Speed Underground* shipped last November, its greatest virtues were obvious, even to nongamers. It is one of the best-looking PS2 games ever made, and it taps into the hottest aspect of car culture. That said, no one was really fully prepared for just how hot it would turn out to be. It hit the No. 1 spot in its opening week and hung on to the position for more than a month...an especially impressive feat considering the number of high-profile games released during the holiday season. By the end of December, the game was in the No. 2 spot *for the entire year* behind EA stablemate *Madden NFL 2004* and had sold nearly a million units on PS2. *Underground* has remained popular in 2004 as well.

It's no surprise to learn that Electronic Arts is keen to take advantage of this success and hit us with some kind of *Need for Speed* sequel this year. Rumors have been flying as to exactly what form this would take; the most likely guess seemed to be that the sequel would mix the "traditional" *NFS* fare (exotics like Ferraris and Lamborghinis) with *Underground*'s rice racers. What no one seemed to expect was a full-on sequel to *Underground* in such a short period of time, but that's exactly what we're getting.

UNDERGROUND 2 IN 60 SECONDS

For those of you who don't want to read the feature

1. *Underground* ended 2003 as the No. 2 game for the year behind *Madden*. It has now sold more than 1 million copies.
2. The new game takes place in an open city, and you drive between events.
3. You also drive to the tuner shops, which earns it the obligatory "influenced by *GTA*" badge.
4. There will be at least seven different types of events this time, and although not yet announced, there will be more short-sharp-shock events like the drag race.
5. The graphics are going to be even better (if you can imagine that), and the whole thing still takes place at night.
6. You don't have to race certain events if you don't want to. Don't like to drift? What are you, weird? Then don't.
7. The customization system is way deeper—you'll be able to tune individual parts, and body kit parts will actually have a discernable aerodynamic effect.
8. You can build a collection of cars and put them in your garage. You don't have to stick with just one. Cool.

We hooked up with some of the key members of the *Underground 2* team and stood around looking at a tricked-out Honda Civic.

OPM The first *Underground* is still pretty hot; you must have started cooking on the new one almost immediately after the original. What's the vision for this one?

CHUCK OSIEJA, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER The vision from the start has been to take *Underground 2* to a whole new level in terms of the experience and how the player interacts with the world. The first *Underground* allowed us to introduce players to tuner culture and allowed them to discover what tuning is all about. We really wanted to nail the idea of giving players enough customization options to build the cars that they really wanted.

This time out, we're expanding that idea to the world and focusing on the idea of discovery of the tuner scene. The player isn't handed every race. They have to go out and find them. This year the world is huge, and it's all interconnected. There will be five distinct sections of the city, and the whole thing will be tied together with a pretty intense system of freeways. Players will be able to drive from one end of the city to the other, once they've unlocked all of the areas.

The first *Underground* was really a collection of tracks that were in the same world, but you could only drive on one at a time. This year you can drive from a circuit event to a drift event to a drag event without ever leaving the world. You can be racing in a point-to-point race and drive right past an area where a drift event is taking place. The world is alive, and things are happening as you drive through it.

You also drive to all of the tuner shops in the world. In order to get the parts in the game, you'll have to find out where they are by talking to other drivers and then finding the shops in the city. Inventories change and new parts and options arrive all the time, so knowing where the best shops are is really an advantage. We're really building on the idea that once players are in the *Underground 2* world, they never have to leave. It's a much more organic approach to the game this year.

HABIB ZARGARPOUR, SENIOR ART DIRECTOR We're using the previous game as a launching pad and adding an amazing number of parts, cars, and customizations that will provide much more variety. *Underground 2* will look like it's related to *Underground*, but with many visual enhancements that push the look further in the same direction. We had some great goals to begin with last year, and it took a daring sense of adventure to try and go there. Now we dare to go even closer to those goals.

OPM How can you possibly make the new game look better than the last one?

NEIL ESKURI, SENIOR ART DIRECTOR *Underground* was a very good-looking game with fabulous detail, but for the sequel we're adding greater variety in terrain as well as implementing a cinematic look. When you watch a movie, color is used to achieve a mood and feeling. *Underground* tended to have a similar look throughout all of the races, so for the sequel we're planning on several distinct areas of the city, and each will have its own mood.

OPM The first game pushed the limits of the PS2 quite visibly. Are there things that you want to do with the franchise that the current technology just won't allow?

CHUCK You're right, we were pushing the limits of the hardware. There are quite a few things that we'll be refining from the first engine that will allow us to add some slick effects into *Underground 2*. We really only got to about half of the effects that we wanted to get into the game. The rendering team has developed quite a few effects that will really change the way the game looks and feels. We have a "button" in the engine that allows us to turn on all of the effects that we've added at once and instantly swap from *Underground* to *Underground 2*. The difference is really dramatic.

> **"WE CAN STILL PUSH THE PS2 FURTHER..."**

HABIB We can still push the PS2 further in terms of graphics. There are some great-looking titles out there, but it is becoming increasingly tougher to squeeze more out of the box. There have been some great strides made recently—like streaming data so not all of it has to be in memory at the same time, allowing us to make bigger worlds—and we are looking for more clever ways to use the same hardware. The trick is to focus on a few specific things we want to do graphically and push those as far as we can. We are all looking forward to the next generation of consoles to be able to match the visual complexity seen in today's movie effects.

ARN ANDT, LEAD ENGINEER The effect we've always wanted to do is a "true" motion blur, but the hardware isn't at a point where we can do those effects to the level we want yet. There's definitely more room to push the graphics, though.

NEIL It's an interesting dance between technology and artistic appetite. I'm constantly amazed at what is added through technology and at the same time frustrated by the limits of the processors or just what we can put on the DVD. It's always an issue, but it also enhances creativity to find ways to achieve what you want within the limits. In *Underground 2*, the world is much larger, and we're always trying to put more into the look of the cars. There is a limitation to how much we can put onscreen at any one time, but we want to show more. Therein lies the creativity. The team is extremely resourceful at finding ways to keep pushing the bar. Artistic issues push the limits of technology, and then technology will open artistic ideas that were not possible previously.

OPM The first game had an incredible sense of speed; what are you doing to enhance or make this new in the second game?

CHUCK I'm not giving away any secrets this year. We've got a few more things that we're planning to add into the mix to crank up the sensation of speed a few more notches, but after seeing some of the driving games that are going to ship later this year, it's obvious that they've learned a few things from *Underground* that they're applying. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so I shouldn't be surprised that camera shake and wet streets are already showing up.

OPM What are the most challenging aspects of working on the *Need for Speed* franchise?

HABIB Driving games are very challenging because of the amount of road that can be covered at high speeds. This means a ton of geometry and textures whipping by. The *Need for Speed* franchise is especially difficult because the worlds are fictitious; we don't copy an existing city. The roads are specifically designed to give you the best racing experience. The worlds surrounding the many miles of driving have to be designed to look interesting and be exciting to drive through, and that's the biggest challenge.

OPM As cool as the challenges in *Underground* are, it gets kind of repetitive because of the sequence (race, drag, drift, wash, rinse, repeat). How will you add more variety to the experience so it doesn't feel like you're doing the same thing over and over again?

CHUCK You noticed, huh? I personally put in over 1,000 hours tuning the game, so I know

THE TALENT

THE *UNDERGROUND 2* TEAM AT EA CANADA IS HUGE, BUT THESE FOUR GUYS HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL

HABIB ZARGARPOUR
SENIOR ART DIRECTOR

- Zargarpour worked at ILM for nine years on many films, including *The Mask, Twister, Star Wars: Episode I, The Perfect Storm,* and *Signs.*
- He was nominated for two Academy Awards for visual effects in *Twister* and *The Perfect Storm.*
- He won the British Academy Award (BAFTA) for visual effects in *Twister* and *The Perfect Storm.*
- Comic book fans will be pleased to learn that he created Spawn's cape effect in the movie *Spawn.*
- He's the creator of MelBotWars www.melbotwars.com.

CHUCK OSIEJA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

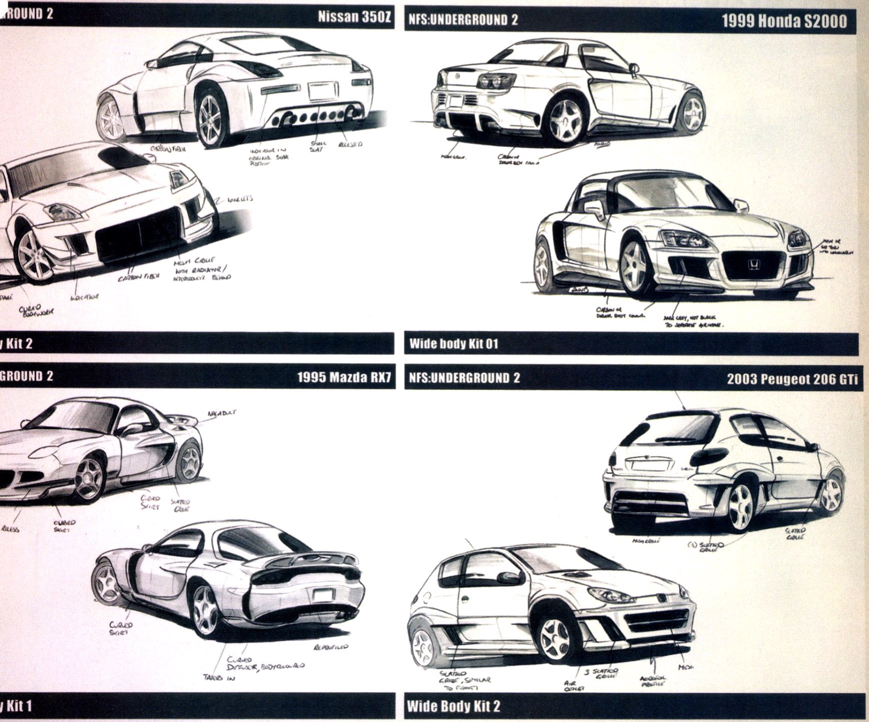
- He's been working in the game industry for 14 years.
- He invented the batting cursor for the *World Series Baseball* franchise for Sega Genesis.
- In the Genesis *World Series Baseball* games, he appears as every player.
- He's traveled to every single baseball stadium twice (before 1998).
- He went to wrestling school while researching EA's *WCW Mayhem.*

ARN ANDT
ENGINEERING LEAD

- Andt is the cofounder of the Black Box Games studio (now part of EA Canada).
- He was the lead rendering programmer for *Hot Pursuit 2* and *Underground.*
- He created *Underground*'s awesome lighting system.
- The first game he wrote code for was *Grid Runner* for Sega Saturn.
- He's been an international techno DJ for seven years, playing shows around Canada and Japan.

NEIL ESKURI
SENIOR ART DIRECTOR

- He was a ski patrolman at Mammoth Mountain for several years.
- He worked on the Academy Award–winning EFX team for *Total Recall.*
- Eskuri was the digital effects supervisor for Disney's *Dinosaur.*
- He is an Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences member in visual effects.
- He worked his way through college as a professional magician.


ROUND 2
Nissan 350Z
CARBON FIBRE
SMALL SLAT
RECESSED
WINGLETS
MESH GRILLE WITH RADIATOR/ INTERCOOLER BEHIND
CARBON FIBRE
INDICATOR
CURVED BODYWORK
Kit 2
NFS:UNDERGROUND 2
1999 Honda S2000
MESH GRILLE
Wide body Kit 01
GROUND 2
1995 Mazda RX7
NACA DUCT
CURVED SKIRT
SLOTTED GRILLE
CURVED SKIRT
CURVED SKIRT
REPROFILED
CURVED DIFFUSER, BODYCOLOURED
Kit 1
NFS:UNDERGROUND 2
2003 Peugeot 206 GTi
MESH GRILLE
(3) SLOTTED GRILLE
SLOTTED GRILLE
SLOTTED GRILLE, SIMILAR TO FRONT
3 SLOTTED GRILLE
AIR OUTLET
MESH
Wide Body Kit 2

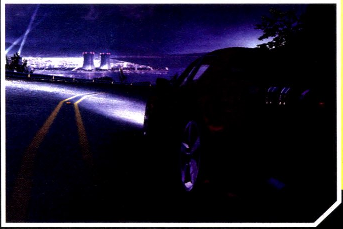
EXPRESSIVE OUTERWEAR

BODY KITS WITH BENEFITS

The *Underground 2* team worked meticulously on every body kit part for every car in the game, and we got our hands on some of the designs that will make their way into the final product. As with the first game, this expressive outerwear varies from the subtle to the crazy, but this time the new shapes have a direct effect on the car's performance.

"I'M STUNNED HOW MANY PEOPLE PLAY ONLINE."

MAZDA RX-8
One of the new cars in *Underground 2*, the RX-8 is one of the newest cars to be taking the tuning world by storm. It's stylish, relatively easy to tweak (just like its older brother, the RX-7), and it has lots of potential for performance upgrades.



HOW MANY CARS?
We don't know yet...but there will be lots

Although a final car list hasn't been announced yet, the team has been able to drop some hints using the images it released for this story. Across these pages you'll find the kick-ass new Nissan 350Z, the diminutive and rally-dominating Peugeot 206GTi, the blisteringly fast Mitsubishi Evo VIII, the space age Mazda RX-8, and the universally appreciated Mazda RX-7. All of them are heavy hitters, with the RX-7 in particular being an evergreen favorite. *Import Tuner* declares, "If you're going to s**t-talk the RX-7, you may as well be smack-talking your own mother." We're assured that there will be plenty more when the game is released this November.

where you're coming from. This is one of the focuses for *Underground 2*—let the players determine their experience. We're designing an event system that allows players to play only the events they want to play and still make it through the game. If you love drifting and circuits, you can become great at those. If you prefer drag or one of the new modes, play those.

OPM **What are the new modes?**

CHUCK I can't tell you right now. What I can say is that there will be over seven different race modes, so I think that everyone will find enough events that they want to play, and they won't be forced to play the ones that they don't like. You don't have to finish all of the events in a region to move on, either. Earn enough cash and reputation, and new areas of the world will open up to you. We've also designed the events so that you can go back and play any event over again.

OPM **What cars do you want to get into the sequel?**

CHUCK We've already settled on our car list, and I think players will be happy with the choices that we've made. We're still in negotiations with some of the manufacturers, so I can't mention the cars right now, but it will definitely be a broader selection of vehicles than what we had last year. If you've watched the tuning scene over the last year, and lord knows I've been to enough car shows, the types of vehicles being tuned are really starting to run the gamut. Things you wouldn't think of as being tuned last year are showing up all tricked out this year.

The majority of the list will still be hardcore tuner cars. We had a long list last year, and we had to make some pretty painful cuts to get the cars done. We'll be going back in time for a couple of older models, and we'll also be looking into the future at a few cars we think will be big on the scene in the next year or so.

OPM **You drive a Toyota Sequoia, right? With SUVs being such a big part of the mod and tuning culture now, is there any desire to bring a bit of big-truck bling into *Underground*?**

CHUCK Hmm. Interesting idea. If we did, and I'm not saying we are, you'd have to make them fit. You can't just throw them in and expect the player to say, "Yippee, they put SUVs in *Underground*." They need a reason to be there, and they need to be integrated into the rest of the game. They would need to bring something special to the party. Stay tuned.

OPM **Have you seen any trends in the online play of *Underground* that you want to address and improve in the sequel?**

CHUCK I'm really stunned by how many people are playing online. I've played some other racing games online, and after a week you'll be lucky to find anyone to race against. *Underground* has really struck a chord with online gamers.

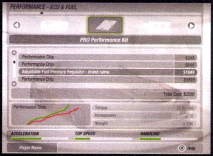
The biggest trend I think we've seen is the popularity of the drag racing. I think the reason for it is that the races are so short. You don't have to be a pure driver to be good at drag racing; you just have to have good reactions. The other factor is that even if you know you're going to lose, the races are short enough that there isn't any reason to quit out; 20 seconds later, you can get right back into another drag and try and change the results. We're working on a couple of new race modes that are similar—what we call "burst" experiences, short races that are very, very, intense. I think they'll be just as popular online.

OPM **What's the fastest speed you've ever experienced in a car?**

CHUCK I've gotten up over 120 mph a couple of times, mostly in high school when I was young and reckless.

UNDER THE HOOD

IT'S MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THIS TIME



PERFORMANCE - ECU & FUEL

PRO Performance Kit

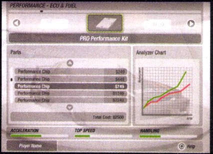
Performance Chip	$249
Performance Chip	$649
Adjustable Fuel Pressure Regulator - brand name	$1649
Performance Chip	$5849

Total Cost: $2500

Performance Stats

Torque	25 ft-lbs
Horsepower	+10
Weight	+100

Using the performance upgrades is a much more complex process in *Underground 2,* and the effects they produce are much more adequately communicated through a much cooler-looking interface.



PERFORMANCE - ECU & FUEL

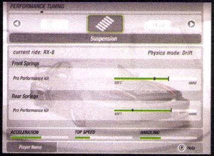
PRO Performance Kit

Parts

Performance Chip	$249
Performance Chip	$449
Performance Chip	$749
Performance Chip	$1249
Performance Chip	$2249

Total Cost: $2500

In the first game, you simply bought what appeared to be generic upgrades that enhanced the performance of your ride. In *Underground 2,* you're presented with many more choices, and you now have to manage your available cash to find the best possible upgrade for specific events. As you can see here, there are more performance chips available for you to buy, and they vary greatly in cost and benefit.



PERFORMANCE TUNING

Suspension

current ride: RX-8

Physics mode: Drift

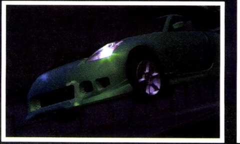
Front Springs

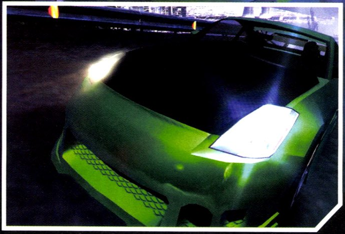
Pro Performance kit

Rear Springs

Pro Performance kit

Many *Underground* fans were frustrated that they couldn't directly affect the way the car was set up. This time you can go much deeper and tweak many aspects between each race. This example shows the suspension sliders you can tweak, which will affect the performance graphs that appear at the bottom of the screen.





NISSAN 350Z

One of the signs that the once-failing Nissan is well and truly back in business, the 350Z packs awesome power, great looks, and tons of potential for upgrading its 280bhp V6. Expect it to be a popular choice in *Underground 2.*

NEIL I was driving my brother's Pontiac Le Mans and trying to impress my girlfriend. We were on the freeway at around 2 a.m. and I pegged it at 120 mph.

The car started to shake and my heart began to pound and I brought it down. It was a thrill, but that was the only time.

OPM Will gearing make it into the new version? Will you be able to affect the setup of the car in a more specific way?

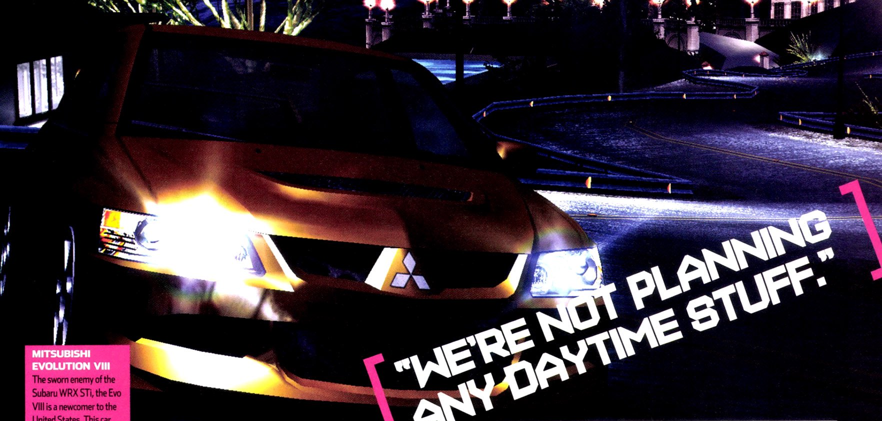
CHUCK Oh yeah. One of the focuses of the game this year is to have a deep performance-customization aspect to the cars. We're not changing the kits and packages that we had last year, but instead, we're adding the ability for the player to buy and tune individual performance parts. Gear, shocks, torque curves, and much more will all be there for the player with enough car "know-how" to squeeze that little extra out of the parts that they put on their cars. Not only will you be able to tune individual parts on your car, but you will also be able to save multiple setups and then load them before each race.

At the same time, we don't put the players who don't have a lot of tuning knowledge at a disadvantage, because they can still buy and apply the kits and packages and get great performance upgrades for their cars.

We're adding more parts to the game that you can customize both visually and mechanically. We're also adding some new areas on the car to customize. We've been seeing a lot of really neat trends happening in the tuner scene over the last six months, so we're making sure to be as up-to-date as possible. The other significant aspect that we're adding this year is that visual parts that affect the physics of the car in real life will now have the same effect inside the game. Some of them, like spoilers for example, will also be tweakable so that you can increase or decrease the net impact of the part on the car.

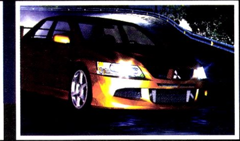
OPM Mechanical upgrades were pretty generic in the first game. Will this be expanded on in *Underground 2*?

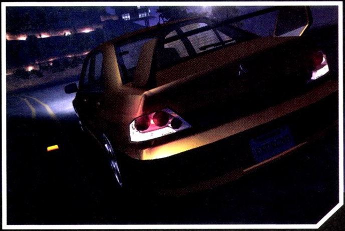
CHUCK The ability to tune performance parts was the most requested feature that we heard during our consumer feedback research for *Underground.* That's why it has become a focus for *Underground 2.* We really want to give players the same flexibility mechanically that we gave them visually. At the same time, we don't want to turn the game into the type of experience where you need to know about wheel camber and gear ratios to be successful. The game is being



"WE'RE NOT PLANNING ANY DAYTIME STUFF."

MITSUBISHI EVOLUTION VIII
The sworn enemy of the Subaru WRX STi, the Evo VIII is a newcomer to the United States. This car, like the seven variants before it, has been winning rallies and street races for years elsewhere in the world.





NEED FOR URLS
Check out these sites to meet like-minded fans

Many of the top *Need for Speed* sites are PC-centric because of the huge download opportunities. The forums are great places to hang out and talk about cars, though.

www.needforspeed.com
The official homepage for the game.

www.needforbetter-speed.net
Awesome site with great forums and downloads.

www.racerplanet.net
A great network of gearhead gamer sites with great forums and news.

www.nfscheats.com
Guess what? Cheats for the *NFS* games.

designed to be easy to pick up and play, with a lot of performance tuning depth for those players who want to dig into it. The fail-safe is that as a player, you'll never be able to screw up your car permanently, because for each part, kit, and package there will be a way to reset it back to its original performance specs.

OPM **Can you keep more than one car in *Underground 2*? Not being able to was one of the disappointments of the first game, and it's something that everyone would probably ask for next time.**

CHUCK Yes, you'll be able to fill your garage with more than one car and then take the one you want to each race. In fact, you'll be required to own more than one car, because there will be certain events that you won't be able to do with certain cars. You won't be able to make it all the way through underground mode this year with only one car, but you also won't have to give up a car that you really love. You can buy other cars and have them in the garage. That means that the "economy" in the game will play an important role in your success this year. You'll have to decide when to spend your money, not just what to spend it on.

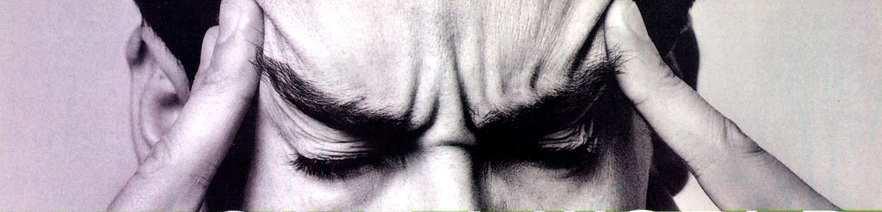
OPM **Street-racing culture is very much a nighttime thing, but will we see races or events in the sequel during the day? If so, what different challenges do you face dealing with the change in lighting?**

NEIL No, we're not planning any daytime stuff. But it would sure make it easier for the user to see the road. One of the biggest challenges for daytime lighting is in presenting the level of detail throughout the world. Because the sun illuminates everything, you've got more of the world lit, which you don't need when it's dark. Because it's daytime, you don't have as much of the specific lighting that you have at night, so a lot of the cool-looking neon and street lighting you can't use. The use of shadow becomes one of your biggest tools, along with the angle of the sun and any weather you add to the game.

OPM **What is the future of racing games? Where is it all going? Is there anything that can be done to make the genre much different in the future?**

CHUCK That's really the million-dollar question, isn't it? I think that games like *Underground* and the *GT* series have proven that players really want the ability to customize their racing experience. Whether it's with a wide selection of visuals and performance, like in *Underground*, or with a wide variety of cars, like in *GT*, I think that's the "cost of entry" now. As a player, you need to be able to express yourself and your personality through the car you're driving or through what you've done to it. Unless it's a pure arcade experience, I think that any time you're asking a player to invest significant time, you need to give them enough choices to personalize their game.

The biggest problem that I see is a lack of creativity. It's rare that I pick up a mag and see a racing game and say, "I can't wait to get my hands on that." There is way too much "me too" in the industry, and consumers are too smart to fall for it. Look at all of the *GT* clones that have shipped in the last few years. They didn't even try to do anything different. We're seeing the same thing now with *Underground*. We knew it was going to happen, but here come the "street-racing games with rain-slicked roads." Whoo-hoo, can't wait for that. As a gamer, I play as much as I can, and I think that my tastes are as discriminating as anyone's. I've only got so much time to dedicate to my gaming, so I want my experience to either be "tried and true" with a brand that I know consistently delivers, or I want it to be something new and fresh that challenges my skills. I want to get my $50 worth every time. «



IMAGINE A WORLD

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[⬢⬢⬢⬢⬢]

RATING KEY

Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

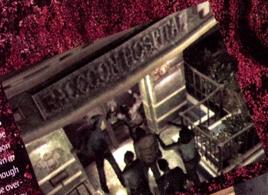
[★]

GAME OF THE MONTH

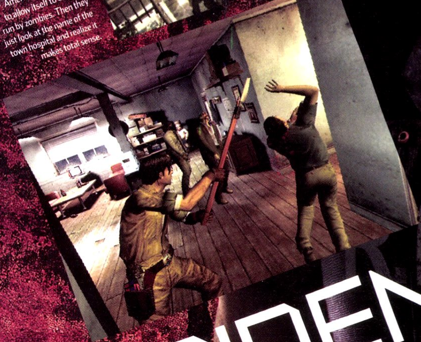
HITMAN: CONTRACTS

AGENT 47 DOES IT AGAIN

A bunch of odd themes surfaced in this month's Reviews section. Several licenses, none related to a movie. Games centered around viruses. Baseball games you'll never play. Samurai. And a helluva lot of games beginning with the letter S. But rising above them all was Hitman: Contracts, the third game in the Hitman franchise (if only the second on PS2). Agent 47 is here to stay, and we couldn't be happier.



MORONS
Sometimes people wonder why Raccoon City is the one town in America stupid enough to allow itself to be overrun by zombies. Then they just look at the name of the town hospital and realize it makes total sense.

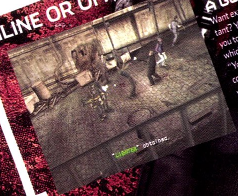


RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREA

ONLINE OR OFF, IT'S STILL DISAPPOINTING

COMMUNICATION IS A GOOD THING

Want examples about why communication is so important? You've got 'em. One early situation (left) requires you to pick up a lighter and use it to ignite an oil spill, which you cause about 20 yards away. Being able to say, "You get the lighter, I'll spill the gas" would be oh-so-welcome. But you can't. Nor can you even indicate which floor you should head to after you enter an elevator—each player chooses his or her own floor, so odds are, you're getting separated for no good reason.



Three years ago when the Network Adaptor was first announced, word leaked of a game known simply as *Resident Evil Online*. Excited gamers everywhere speculated on how a networked *Resident Evil* could possibly work—but no one could figure it out. Now that *Outbreak* has finally spread to PS2s everywhere, one thing is painfully obvious: neither could Capcom.

Online—the primary way you'll want to play it—*Outbreak* disappoints. It's a sad thing because the escape-from-zombies/ solve-dumb-puzzles formula actually does have online potential. Not being able to chat with your companions really screws things up, though. During gameplay, you get only 10 commands programmed into the right stick—useful, but way too limiting. Communication is critical in a game like this, especially since the fixed camera angles don't allow you to properly locate your comrades.

These levels are *long*, too, allowing players all the more time to lose one another. The shortest one takes about 30 minutes if you know what you're doing. But odds are, at least one—or two or three—of your companions will be absolutely clueless. And even though the last couple of scenarios last about an hour when you all *do* have a clue, there's no way to save your progress.

You're going to die a *lot*, too, and you'll turn into a zombie more than you'd like (at least online). That may sound cool, but do you *really* want to suddenly turn against the teammates with whom you worked so hard to make it so far? If so, you're probably as likely to die just *so* that you can be evil like that. For everyone else, this doesn't make the game fun—just annoying.

You'll probably enjoy *Outbreak* more as an offline game—at least at first, when you want to figure out how to beat all five scenarios (which, sadly, for the sake of storytelling, in no way relate to one another). The A.I. player characters aren't perfect, but they can hold their own well enough. And unlike online players, they'll almost always readily hand you any item of theirs you want.

I like how each of the eight selectable characters has his or her own special abilities—anything from picking locks to playing dead. David's ability to combine items to make weapons (e.g., combine a battery and lead pipe to form a shock stick) demonstrates *Outbreak*'s **welcome sense of inventiveness.** If only you didn't need a strategy guide to see everything the game offers.

Beyond the online component, *Outbreak* essentially plays like any other *Resident Evil*, only with a lesser story, better (though still imperfect) controls, and improved voice acting. It really is a solid survival-horror game that fans should check out. It just could have been so much better. « *Chris Baker*

PlayStation RATING

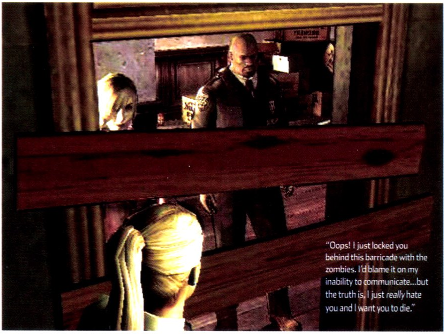
PROS Very inventive, excellent graphics and atmosphere, characters have own personalities, includes lots of stuff you'd never think of

CONS No voice/keyboard chat, no true save ability, instant deaths, just plain disappointing

Pub. Capcom Dev. Capcom ESRB Mature MSRP $49.99

[●●●◐○]

EQUAL TIME



"Oops! I just locked you behind this barricade with the zombies. I'd blame it on my inability to communicate...but the truth is, I just *really* hate you and I want you to die."

Yeah, so maybe we had some problems with *Outbreak*. Some things made us just wanna ask the developers why they opted to do certain things. So we did. Tsuyoshi Tanaka (a former Japanese videogame magazine editor) is the game's producer. His first game was *Devil May Cry 2*, and he's currently heading up the team behind *Monster Hunter*.

OPM Why not include voice or keyboard chat during gameplay?

TSUYOSHI TANAKA Trying to get the maximum number of enemies and characters on the same screen was putting quite a hit on the CPU. The number of enemies and number of onscreen characters is a fundamental area we felt had to be implemented perfectly in the game. Adding voice chat/keyboard functionality would have in turn required us to take away from a different area of gameplay, so we decided to pass. However, even more than the technical limitations was the staff's idea of what the game should be. In our research for this game, we played lots of online games. Most of them had voice chat. Unfortunately, most of them turned into insult exchanges and shouting matches. We soon realized that this wasn't the type of atmosphere we desired for a horror game.

OPM Why is it that the A.I. characters (especially Alyssa in scenario 2) sometimes never shut up in single-player mode?

TT We all know them—the type of people who just won't stop talking. The A.I. characters in the game have individual wills and personalities. So some are going to get freaked out and start speaking a mile a minute. I think this is the closest to true reality that you are going to get.

OPM The scenarios don't seem to relate very well to one another—one moment you're in a bar downtown, another you're in a lab. Why?

TT This was an intentional choice. There are plenty of movies out there that cut back and forth from past to present. Those cuts give the movie an unsettling, jarring feeling, like you can't relax because you don't know what's coming next. We feel it pulls you into the confusion and anarchy that is going on at various points in the *Outbreak* world.

OPM Why can't we save games online? And why do we have to exit to the Main menu in order to save in the single-player mode?

"AS A TEAM, WE WANT TO MAKE PLAYERS CHALLENGE THEMSELVES."

TT We really didn't want to add [the ability to save offline] because we think that the scenarios are already just the right length. They aren't so long that it would break your will having to start from scratch. Part of the game's tension or fear, if you will, comes from the fear that you may die and have to start all over again. Making the save system easily accessible would have allowed players to save every step of the way. There are tons of gamers out there who do it. As a development team, we want to make players challenge themselves. Make the game too hard, and you get complaints that it's too frustrating. Make the game too easy, and it's not satisfying, either. Making the save system hard to reach was our way of challenging the player.

Saving the game online was never an option. If you saved it online, you'd have to have the same exact team members continue playing. That would be great for playing with your friends, but a lot of people are just going to play with random strangers who they may never see again after that one game they play together. So we decided not to include this as an option. «

LA PUCELLE: TACTICS

LIKE DISGAEA...BUT NOT

Another year, another strategy-RPG from Nippon Ichi—or so American fans should hope. *La Pucelle: Tactics* shows that NI's similar *Disgaea: Hour of Darkness* (2003, published by Atlus) was no fluke. Interestingly, *La Pucelle* was actually developed first, but the developer's dedication to starting from scratch every time ensures this game is every bit as good as *Disgaea*, if in a different way.

Some differences might bother *Disgaea* fans: *La Pucelle* features no large, detailed character portraits like you'd find in *Disgaea*, although there are still plenty of differing window expressions for each character. Also, since NI tends not to reuse gameplay systems, you won't find any systems outside the main game as complex as *Disgaea*'s Dark Congress or Item World.

La Pucelle makes up for this with a greater wealth of in-battle systems that offer more moment-to-moment strategy in battles, compared with *Disgaea*'s focus on setting up the right party and conditions. **Your key characters do much more during battle than just attack the enemy.** For instance, you can take a stab at converting them to your side or try to set up a good Dark Energy combo. Both of these options offer a big payoff but take a lot of careful setup while the enemy is free to attack, so you'll need to proceed with caution.

As far as presentation, *La Pucelle* is mainly what *Disgaea* fans should expect: lots of wholesome, old-fashioned 2D mixed with some rather plain 3D battlegrounds. The story, too, is full of the same inspired wackiness as Lahari's adventures (if you liked *Disgaea*'s Prinny Squad, you'll love the pirate kittens here), and Mastiff's localization job rises to the occasion—there's some really top-tier voice acting here.

The fact that we keep getting these *very* Japanese games is a minor miracle, so give thanks to Mastiff for *La Pucelle*. Don't let it pass you by. **«** *Nich Maragos*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Deep strategy, good localization with a well-experienced voice cast, nice art
CONS Outdated graphics, a little cutesy, kind of a stupid name (kind of like *Disgaea*), which will keep people from buying it

Pub. Mastiff **Dev.** Nippon Ichi **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[○○○○●]

FUTURE TACTICS: THE UPRISING

LOW, HOW THE END IS LOOMING

Everybody wants to rule the world. In *Future Tactics: The Uprising*, it's a bunch of aliens who have colonizing ambitions, and you and your ragtag band of helpers (who better to save the planet?) must rescue Earth from their clutches.

Story mode comprises the single-player portion of the game; each of the 19 scenarios pits your team against an assorted cast of aliens in a unique turn-based-strategy setup. Team members have a wide range of movement for each turn, and where you choose to place them can affect how accurately they take out aliens. The multiplayer battle mode allows you to replay the same scenarios, with one player taking each side.

A good variety of mission objectives requires you to rethink gameplay tactics every level. The graphics are quite good, with fully deformable terrain that adds a fun element in the hide-and-seek you play with the aliens at times. Another nice element: You get to keep any upgrades you've earned if you fail and must restart a level.

There are definite drawbacks, however. One main hindrance is the lack of a level map; you can zoom out and get an overhead view, but on large levels, you can see only up to a quarter of the level at a time. **The real downfall, though, is the waiting.** During the enemy turn, you're forced to wait through the individual moves of every single unit. Watching as seven enemy units make their turn is incredibly tedious, especially since the camera is zoomed so closely on units that you can't tell where on the level they're moving to, making it pointless to watch. How bad can it really be? I wrote the entire review for this game during that downtime.

This isn't a bad game, but it isn't a great one, either. If you're a big turn-based-strategy fan, then pick it up—for $20, you'll get a lot of hours of decent gameplay. But it's not going to bring any new converts to the genre. **«** *Dana Jongewaard*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Good variety of missions, maps, and units
CONS No overhead map, *looooooong* wait times between turns

Pub. Crave **Dev.** Crave **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $19.99

[○○○◐●]

PlayStation

PLAY THE DEMO!

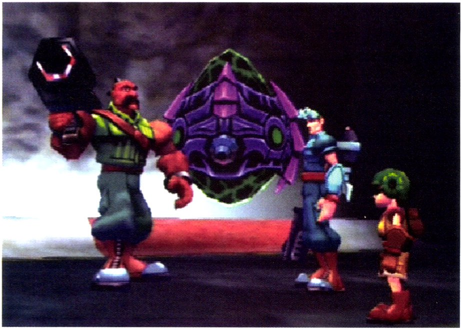
DEMO DISC CHALLENGE!

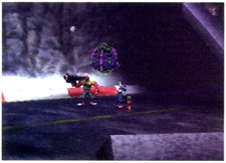
Play the first level of *Future Tactics'* story mode. Your objective: move Low and his father to the other side of the map without dying. Can you...

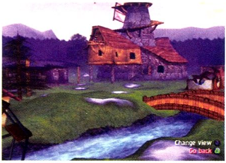
- Get to your destination in three turns or less?
- Kill the Sentrik alien?
- Make it across the map without firing a shot?

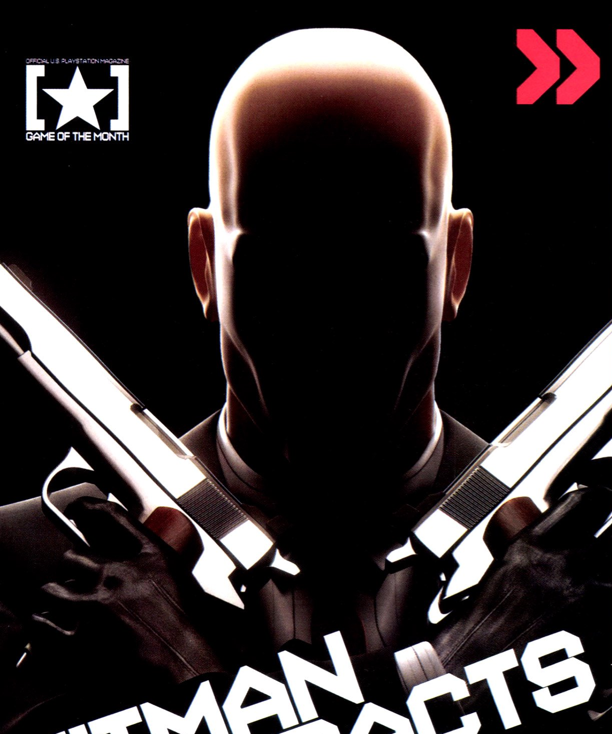
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Remember Gabrielle Carteras, who played Andrea Zuckerman on *Beverly Hills 90210*? These days, in addition to appearing on *The Surreal Life* with other has-beens, she spends a lot of time voice acting for games. She plays Angelique in *La Pucelle* and has also appeared in such titles as *Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits*, *Icewind Dale II*, and *Minority Report*.



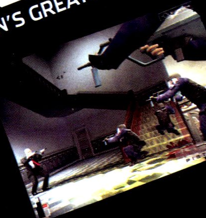


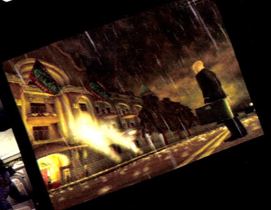




HITMAN CONTRACTS

HITMAN'S GREATEST HITS





In the opening minutes of *The Professional,* Jean Reno deftly eliminates every single bodyguard of his target, Fatman, before demonstrating his skill as an assassin by grabbing his mark from behind and placing a knife to his throat. Later on, Reno describes the art of assassination—about how the best assassins kill at close range rather than use sniper rifles—to a very young Natalie Portman. For anyone who got caught up in the allure of the assassin thanks to that movie, *Hitman: Contracts* is the perfect game.

Contracts' premise is elegantly simple: Assassinate your targets and survive. You can do this simply by murdering your way to your victim, clipping him rapidly, and then cutting another murder-filled swath on the way out—but that just makes *Contracts* a straightforward third-person shooter with little imagination. **What ultimately intrigues and satisfies, though, is taking advantage of the open-ended level design and figuring out a more creative way to kill your target.** Maybe you should impersonate a SWAT officer as you dupe the police into attacking your target and eliminating his protection for you. Perhaps you can smother your victim with a pillow. Maybe poison the food or even the alcohol. Or plant a bomb in the getaway car.

Like previous games, *Contracts* rates your performance based on stealth and aggression. Clip everyone in your way, and you're ranked as Mass Murderer. Coolly avoid detection as you minimize fatalities, and you might gain the fabled Silent Assassin rank, which unlocks bonus weapons to use on your next playthrough. (After finishing the game, your save allows you to instantly jump into any mission and choose from the arsenal you've unlocked.)

Contracts' narrative is even more interesting. Forgoing the more straightforward "here's a string of targets leading up to some big bad dude" approach, *Contracts* not only begins *in medias res* (Agent 47 stumbles, wounded, into a hotel room after a failed assassination attempt), but also slowly inches forward in current time. The missions themselves are Agent 47's own memories from the past. *Contracts* opens with the epilogue of *Hitman: Codename 47* (the series' original), then jets you to places such as Rotterdam, Siberia, England, and China.

Oddly enough, this glimpse into his head translates into the gloomiest title in the franchise. The previous games had their share of dank environs, but harsh weather hits *Contracts* with full force—you'll literally never see natural sunlight anywhere in the game. But make no mistake—despite being drenched in gloom, *Contracts* is quite a beautiful game, thanks mostly to its excellent use of lighting and bloom effects.

Hitman veterans know that the difference between *Codename 47* and *Silent Assassin* was staggering—most of *Codename 47* consisted of stealth plus a gunfight, while *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin* added actual non-shooting methods of assassination. However, *Contracts* feels more like a perfected expansion to *Silent Assassin* rather than a full-on sequel. While *Contracts* provides even more options to not use guns and things like improvisational weapons (pool cues, meat hooks, and the aforementioned pillow), they feel less like a revolution and more like an evolution. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but fans expecting a huge leap in gameplay and design might need to temper their expectations.

Also, **IO made the semi-odd decision to enhance five of the missions from *Codename 47* to accompany the seven others.** While these "remixes" are larger and more open-ended versions of the originals, it still feels kind of weird to have nearly half the game be a revamped version of the first game. Perhaps IO thinks it can get away with this, since much of *Contracts*' console audience never played the original *Hitman*, a PC exclusive. But even for those of us who did give *Codename 47* a go, the remix works sometimes, particularly with Traditions of the Trade, an already cool *Codename 47* mission made even better. If nothing else, the returning levels do manage to look a little better (see sidebar).

Sadly, the last leg of missions, the tetralogy comprising the Lee Hong Assassination, doesn't fare as well. This is due mostly to design that practically demands absolute perfection (a carry-over from the "original sample," as it were) along with even more patience than previously needed. Also, **for the most part, *Contracts* has a "one mission, one location" rhythm to it—a rhythm broken by the Lee Hong Assassination arc.**

The random clipping errors and quirky A.I. problems found in *Contracts* would have doomed any other game. Here, they're mildly annoying at most—they tend to be forgivable, even comical, mishaps. Even when your cover is supposedly blown (despite the fact that both my identifiers and I are wearing face-obscuring masks) or when you see someone forget all about you mere seconds after trying to gun you, it doesn't really interfere with the overall enjoyment. Even when you line up for the difficult fiber-wire kill and end up nudging your target instead, it's still fun. Even when the final level turns out to be mostly trial-and-error as opposed to slick assassination, the overall feel isn't compromised.

As a stealth-action-assassination game on its own, *Contracts* is superb, with few flaws keeping it down. As the third title in a franchise, it's merely a "very good step forward." But stepping forward from what's proving itself an excellent franchise ain't too bad. « *Thierry Nguyen*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

THE FINAL HIT

An excellent refinement of the previous *Hitman* game. For newbies, a spectacular assassination sim with few flaws, but for veterans, perhaps a little underwhelming.

Pub. Eidos **Dev.** IO Interactive **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

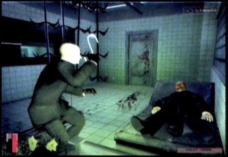
[●●●●◐]

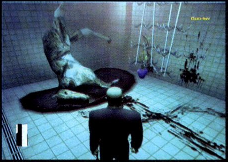
AS A STEALTH-ACTION ASSASSINATION GAME ON ITS OWN, *CONTRACTS* IS SUPERB, WITH FEW FLAWS.

Io-Interactive
MEAT HOOK

PUSHING THE M LIMITS

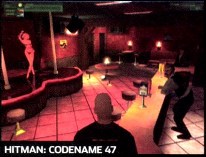
In an interesting contrast to *Manhunt*, *Contracts* also pushes the limits of the Mature rating, but it doesn't feel quite as gratuitous or desensitizing. While *Manhunt* constantly presents lurid violence in your face à la a snuff film, *Contracts* is more like a David Fincher flick—it uses careful dosages of shock and grisly violence to greatly unsettle you but doesn't become an over-the-top cartoon. There are still some America-centric hang-ups present—like a level featuring a seedy strip club in Rotterdam, with strippers in bathing suits and a woman showering with a dress on—but the harsh language, weird S&M get-ups, and refreshingly adult plots merit the M rating. We salute it for actually being, you know, *mature*, like it says on the box.



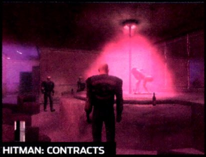


HITMAN: THEN AND NOW

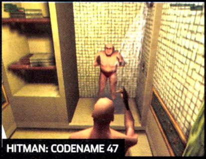
Hitman: Codename 47 hit PCs in 2000, and now you can see, side by side, the difference four years makes in showing the same place. It's nice to see some better-looking strip clubs, of course, but we're a little less excited about the naked fat man in the shower.



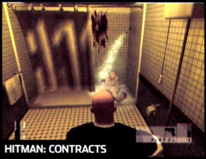
HITMAN: CODENAME 47



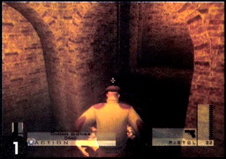
HITMAN: CONTRACTS



HITMAN: CODENAME 47



HITMAN: CONTRACTS



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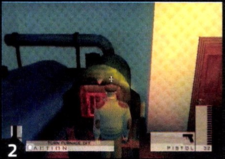

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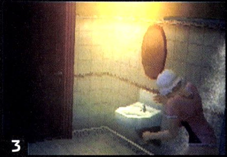

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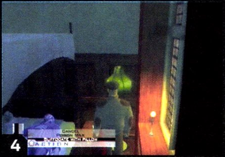

4

Io-Interactive
MAGNUM

DISSECTING AN AMAZING ASSASSINATION

- First off, you can either try tailing an exterior guard and then kill him and steal his uniform 1 or...
- ...simply sneak past him in the hedge maze and down into the cellar.
- Before leaving the cellar, wait for an interior guard to come downstairs and then take his uniform. If you don't, you might arouse suspicion, since the interior guards will wonder what what on earth an exterior guard is doing here.
- Find the water furnace downstairs 2 and turn it off.
- The showering maid loses hot water 3 and leaves her shower to turn the heat back on—you care because her shower is actually part of a secret passage that leads to the master bedroom.
- Use a suppressed pistol to silently take out the bodyguards in the room.
- Use the nearby pillow to smother the old man in his sleep. 4
- Make your way down to the cellar. Now, either...
- ...poison the whiskey and wait for the son to order it...
- ...or grab a gas can and make your way to the third floor, where you can drop it down the chimney.

BADASS BALDIES

1
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12

1. **Vic Mackey,** *The Shield*
2. **Pac-Man**
3. **Lex Luthor,** *Superman)*
4. **Riddick,** *Pitch Black*
5. **Skeletor,** *He-Man*
6. **Destro,** *G.I. Joe*
7. **Karnov,** *Karnov*
8. **Mr. Clean**
9. **Mini-Me,** *Austin Powers*
10. **Skinner,** *The X-Files*
11. **Kingpin,** *Daredevil*
12. **Giancarlo Varanini**

TRIVIAL PURSUIT: UNHINGED

LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR GOOD PIE

There is a certain personality type that is drawn toward games like *Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged.* These are the people you see at the local bar's quiz night, the people who watch *Jeopardy!* and always yell out the answers. Does Atari's digital version of the popular board game provide quiz fans with an adequate trivia fix?

Classic mode brings us the traditional game, and the flash mode provides a quick six-tier speed round. Unhinged, the game's signature mode, mixes things up by allowing you to bet on whether or not your opponents will answer questions correctly; accumulated points can be used to take advantage of random perks, such as trading for a new question or moving to the space of your choice. It's a cool idea, but the reality is that this mode is rather tame and doesn't add much to the gameplay.

A full cast of Z-list stars read the questions. Whoopi Goldberg presents questions from the entertainment category, and other celebs include Terry Bradshaw on sports, John Cleese on history, Brooke Burke on people and places, John Ratzenberger on wild card, and Bill Nye the Science Guy on...well, Science. Sometimes the celebrities add joking commentary after reading the question, but all of their attempts at humor fall flat. Picking the correct answer from a list of multiple-choice options often punishes you with an extended commentary, which really affects the game's flow.

Unhinged's ultimate downfall, however, is that there is no digital opponent when you play alone—apparently, it was decided that offering online play was enough. Since half the fun of games like these is actually beating someone, the lack of A.I. is disappointing. Annoying background elevator music seals your decision: Just buy the board game. « *Dana Jongewaard*

PlayStation RATING

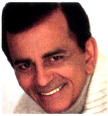
TRIVIAL Of little significance or value
PURSUIT The act of chasing
UNHINGED To be deranged
TRIVIAL PURSUIT: UNHINGED
A crazy, insignificant chase

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Artech Studios **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[●●]

SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

ZOINKS! IT'S, LIKE, A REALLY DECENT SCOOBY GAME!



DID YOU KNOW?
Famous radio DJ Casey Kasem has voiced Shaggy for over 30 years. Unfortunately, he doesn't play Shaggy in *Mystery Mayhem.*

It's really hard to hate Scooby-Doo. And even though his new game isn't all that amazing, *Mystery Mayhem*'s distinct humor (or at least *attempts* at it) and storytelling really hook you. Meanwhile, the gameplay takes a bit of a backseat.

That's not to say playing the game is a horrible experience. It's intended for children, so most of *Mayhem*'s puzzles are fairly straightforward. But they do challenge you enough so that it takes a little while to solve them, regardless of your age.

Mayhem's ghost-capturing element resembles Nintendo's Luigi's Mansion. As such, you won't find the game very difficult at all, especially since you're hardly ever in danger of "dying" (or in this case, just being really frightened). Switching between Scoob and Shag at will adds little gameplay, but, like the canned laugh track that plays whenever something is "funny," it does make the game feel more like the cartoon.

Ultimately, *Mayhem* is a fun, well-executed game for kids and fans of the series. It just won't blow anyone away. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PlayStation RATING

PROS An amusing, simple game for kids
CONS An amusing, simple game for kids

Publisher THQ **Developer** A2M **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●○○]

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

THE LOST EPISODE FROM SEASON SEVEN

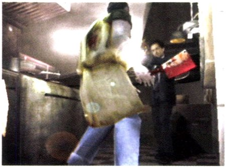
There are elements of *Resist or Serve* that are truly remarkable. Due entirely to the involvement of the writers and cast of the show, it stands apart in a genre not especially known for great scripts or convincing voice acting. David Duchovny delivers his dry wit with trademark indifference, while Gillian Anderson conveys the scientific aloofness that characterized Scully.

Resist or Serve claims to be a "lost episode" from what many argue should have been the final season of *The X-Files* (the seventh), and it delivers on this promise more than adequately. The story weaves together many of the show's most important plot elements with the casual wit that made that season feel so comfortable to fans.

Unfortunately, the gameplay mechanics don't match the class of the story. Just about every survival-horror gameplay faux pas is present, including static camera angles that mess with the controls, the need to run up against every wall to find interactive "hot spots," and erratic load times that break up the action when you least expect it. While the character models are reasonably convincing, if a little stiff, the flat environments are almost completely devoid of anything to interact with. It all feels a bit 1998, to be honest.

Resist or Serve is not completely dreadful, as a game from the makers of *Fugitive Hunter* easily could have been. Fans of the show will want to persevere, if only to hear Mulder make cracks about *Buffy*. The game will disappoint survival-horror fans, however, so this is definitely something for the "casual gamer" end of the spectrum. « *John Davison*

BANNED X-FILE
Season four's "Home" episode, which features a disturbing story about an inbred family locked away in a primitive house, so unsettled viewers that Fox banned it from being rebroadcast. The episode was later released in the season four DVD box set. Our favorite line? Mulder saying to Scully, "Smell that. That's perfume. Eau de Ball."



PlayStation RATING

PROS An excellent script and familiar voice acting will make fans feel at home
CONS Ugly graphics, flat environments, an awful camera

Pub. Vivendi Universal **Dev.** Black Ops **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $29.99

[●●◐○○]

ALIAS

ALSO KNOWN AS "MEDIOCRE"

As a show, *Alias* proves that melding college relationship issues with pyrotechnics and gadgetry can work well. But combining cool network television with a game? That still doesn't.

To its credit, the game does feel like an authentic miniseason of the show. Creator J.J. Abrams wrote the script, and like the show, the game provides a great mix of humor, absurd soap opera, goofball gadgetry, and slick espionage. Getting all the cast members to lend their voices adds to the authenticity—not only do you get to hear the requisite mission briefings and objectives from the cast, but you even experience the randomly meandering musings of your proto-nerd tech guy, Marshall. As an extra bonus, longtime fans wondering what the heck Anna Espinosa has been up to since her disappearance from the show finally get to see Sydney's archenemy again. The writing's only real flaw is its "gamey" nature; it's fine for Sydney to search for one, maybe two things in the show, but in the game, no—she has to find six ancient doohickeys now!

> **"SHE'S BIGGER, BETTER, CURVIER, TOUGHER, AND MEANER."**
>
> *—JENNIFER GARNER ON HER VIDEOGAME DOPPELGANGER*

Alias has the makings of a decent stealth game, but "mediocre" is the more apt term here. While the splitscreen mechanic (using splitscreens instead of a radar to indicate danger or puzzle elements) works well, everything else more closely resembles most of ABC's programming—bland and uninspired.

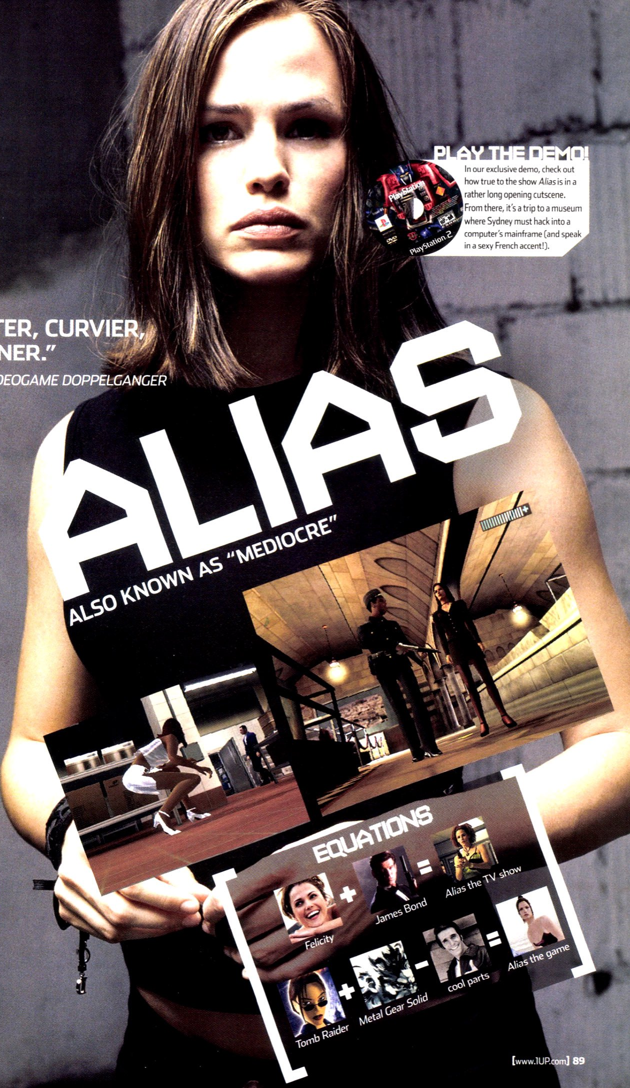
The biggest knock is the combat, which makes up at least half of the game. While the show features remarkably choreographed fight scenes (certainly by television standards, much less so in general), the game's fights are stilted and spastic. Yes, many of Sydney's moves look pretty neat onscreen—when she's alone. But when she's trying to fight someone, the lack of a lock-on feature for her too-long combo moves frequently translates into simply facing the wrong way—she engages in a fancy-looking attack at the cost of remaining vulnerable the entire time. This gets worse when you take on multiple baddies, as you find yourself lining up to hit guys only to find yourself actually hitting air.

The difficulty of the simple puzzles depends largely upon either mere trial and error or quirky camera angling. Figuring out the proper three-letter code sequence for the umpteenth time gets boring, as does fiddling with the camera before you finally see the ladder you need to climb.

Even though *Alias* boasts a sharp script, both show fans and nonfans who just want a good game will find this effort mediocre at best. Despite being given the rare chance to control Jennifer Garner and have her do your bidding, gamers would be better served just watching the show instead. « *Thierry Nguyen*

PLAY THE DEMO!

In our exclusive demo, check out how true to the show *Alias* is in a rather long opening cutscene. From there, it's a trip to a museum where Sydney must hack into a computer's mainframe (and speak in a sexy French accent!).



OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

REVIEW HAIKU

Alias may feel
like the show, but its gameplay
is nothing special.

Pub. Acclaim **Dev.** Acclaim Cheltenham **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[●●◐○○]

SIREN

WELL YES, ACTUALLY, YOU CAN RESIST ITS CALL

Let's do a little Choose Your Own Adventure, shall we? Let's say you're stuck inside a fenced-in, ruined estate, and there's an evil sniper zombie guarding the gate. You need to get out. Do you:

a) find a weapon to brain the zombie with,

b) climb the fence in the back of the house, or

c) locate some kite string, tie one end to a ventilation fan in the kitchen, tie the other end to a metal shelving unit, restore power to the house, and turn on the fan so that the string pulls the shelf over, bringing the zombie into the kitchen to investigate the noise?

If you chose "c," have I got a game for you!

Siren may look like a survival-horror game, but it really isn't. If anything, I'd call it "stealth puzzle." You take on the roles of 10 different characters, who all have the same unusual ability to see through others' eyes. Jumping around in time and space, you find yourself playing out these bizarre vignette-length missions to escape from a village whose population has been turned into *shibito* (read: zombies). If the *shibito* see you, they either shoot you (remarkable shots in the dark, these *shibito*) or chase you. Sometimes you have a weapon to fight them off. More often you don't.

Once you beat the mission, you jump to another character in another time and place. Periodically, the game sends you back to play the *same exact mission*—only this time, you have a (sometimes only slightly) different goal. You'll visit the same area two, three, four times—with only minor differences each time—as the story slowly trickles in.

It's an interesting setup. It could have worked in a nonlinear, fill-in-the-blanks, "*21 Grams* meets *Dawn of the Dead*" kind of way. But it doesn't.

A lot of things contribute to this failing. The mission objectives are often ridiculous, for one thing: One mission actually requires you to search through an entire level for a shoe. A shoe! Furthermore, the déjà vu quality of revisiting the same areas gets tiresome quickly. And seeing through the eyes of zombies (sorry, *shibito*) is, though creepy, really just another take on the guard-and-security-camera system that stealth games have been using for years.

SIREN MAY LOOK LIKE A SURVIVAL-HORROR GAME, BUT IT REALLY ISN'T.

Still, *Siren* gets high marks for style: The game manages to maintain a level of tension and even the occasional moment of terror. In the end, though, the story is so fragmented, the missions so pointless, and the action so sparse that there's no drive to progress. You don't get enough story to care about getting more, and the question of why all these people are zombies isn't enough of a mystery to make me care. « *Joe Rybicki*

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine RATING

PROS Seeing things from your enemies' eyes adds some creepy tension, for sure. Also, there's some seriously whacked-out sound

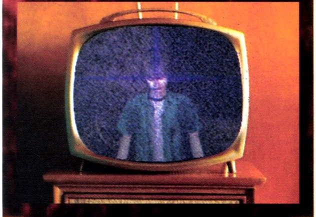
CONS The fragmented story left me more confused and irritated than frightened

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Sony CEI **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●○○]

SIGHTJACKING

The process of locking onto another character's point of view is like tuning an old TV or radio: You slowly rotate the analog stick until the static resolves into an image—complete with the animal mutterings of the *shibito*. You can then "bookmark" the images for future use.



PlayStation
RP-M

WATCH IT!

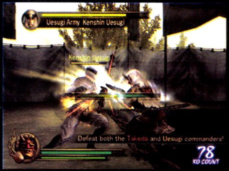
INTELLIGENT FEAR

This month's disc has a video with behind-the-scenes insight from the executive producer and U.S. producer of the game. Find out how what special tricks they used to increase your fear as you play this horror game.

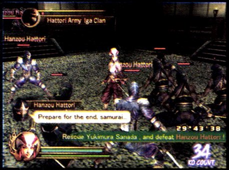
WATCH IT!

NINJA MAYHEM

Find out why the producer fused historical and sci-fi elements to create the game's playing dynamic, thereby allowing you to roam across the gamescape, wreaking havoc as a lone warrior.



Defeat both the Takeda and Uesugi commanders!



Prepare for the end, samurai...

Rescue Yukimura Sanada , and defeat Hanzou Hattori !

SAMURAI WARRIORS

SAME TACTICAL ACTION, DIFFERENT SETTING

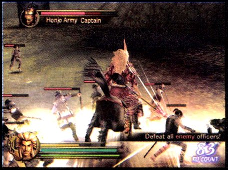
The answer to your first question about *Samurai Warriors* is yes—it pretty much *is* just *Dynasty Warriors* set in feudal Japan instead of ancient China. Hence, it's a great game with more depth and replayability (not to mention fog and characters who pop up out of nowhere) than any other hack-n-slash franchise out there. Even if you have basically played it already.

That said, *Samurai* does include some mechanics and features that distinguish it from other Koei games with *Warriors* in the title. You know how *Dynasty* games always require you to find the most efficient way to slice 'n' dice your way to the lead general? You still do that in *Samurai*, but each level's internal objectives—more than 500 of them spread throughout the 90 battles—also tend to offer more guidance. You may, for instance, be ordered to defeat a certain soldier; whether or not you successfully fulfill the request may (or may not) accomplish anything, from progressing your character's story to unlocking other objectives to ending the mission right then and there. This feature adds a bit of linearity to each level, but in a welcome way—**don't be surprised if you find yourself revisiting certain engagements just to perfectly fulfill each of its objectives.** This "I must do everything" feeling adds substantial game time to what's typically a two-hour game per character, which further helps compensate for the game having "only" 15 playable characters—just a few compared with *Dynasty 4*'s 43.

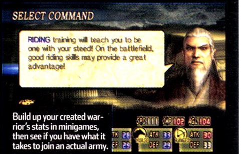
Of all 58 characters in any *Warriors* game, though, none is more badass than *Samurai*'s ninja, Hanzo Hattori. Granted, the limited sneaking around he does ain't exactly what you'd find in *Tenchu*. But nothing beats his assortment of weapons, be it the sickle-and-chain he whirls around his head or the shurikens he throws with precision. (Conversely, Oichi's *kendama*—a device not unlike the ball-and-cup toy you won at Chuck E. Cheese's for 12 tickets—could very well be the lamest weapon in videogame history.)

Most characters have at least one level that takes place in a castle, complete with all sorts of booby traps such as spiked floors and huge buzz saws. The game stabs for platform elements here, but it doesn't quite work—each room looks remarkably similar to the last, and it's way too easy to get lost. To top that off, you can't even save in these levels, as you can anywhere else. Let's hope *Samurai* is the last *Warriors* game to include such uninspired stages.

But hey, at least they're trying to add some variety to the *Warriors* series. And even if the castle levels don't quite work, *Samurai* still delivers the satisfying tactical-action experience for which Koei has become so well known. « *Chris Baker*



Defeat all enemy officers!



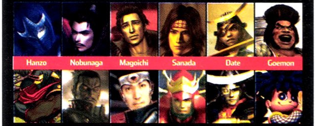
RIDING training will teach you to be one with your steed! On the battlefield, good riding skills may provide a great advantage!

Build up your created warrior's stats in minigames, then see if you have what it takes to join an actual army.

8 months until the Trials

LOOK FAMILIAR?

Samurai Warriors uses real-life Japanese historical figures—just like a bunch of other games. Here are just a few examples.



- You may recognize some names from SNK's *Samurai Shodown* series, such as **Hanzo Hattori** and **Ukyo Tachibana**.
- Of course, the *Onimusha* series' main adversary is none other than the resurrected demon version of warlord **Nobunaga Oda**, who even *Samurai Warriors* refers to as the "Demon Lord." In *Onimusha 2*, rifleman **Magoichi Saika** assists Jubei Yagyu against Nobunaga. And on a related note, *Onimusha* hero Samanosuke Akechi is the lesser-known nephew of *Samurai Warriors*' **Mitsuhide Akechi**, who briefly appears in *Onimusha 3*.
- *Samurai Warriors* cover boy **Yukimura Sanada** plays a much more subdued role as the guardian of the Toyotomi in *Kessen*. On the other side sits the cavalry unit of **Masamune Date**.
- And we'd forgive you for not recognizing **Ishikawa Goemon** as the star of N64's *Magical Ninja*. Every Japanese thief has blue spiky hair!

PlayStation RATING

REVIEW HAIKU

It's basically
Dynasty Warriors—just
in feudal Japan.

Pub. Koei/EA **Dev.** Omega Force **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●○]

TRANSFOR

PLAY THE DEMO!

CHECK OUT THE GAME'S FIRST LEVEL
It features a lush Amazonian jungle and plenty of Mini-Cons to find. Don't forget to see how cool it is to zoom up a hill and transform once you're in midair!

YES, THIS REALLY IS AN ACTUAL SCREENSHOT FROM *TRANSFORMERS*. THE GAME DOES LOOK THIS GOOD, AND THE BOSSES DO GET THIS BIG.

ART

There's all kinds of Autobot and Decepticon concept art, including some early versions of the Decepticlones designed for the game. There are also images of the environments and cut-scenes.

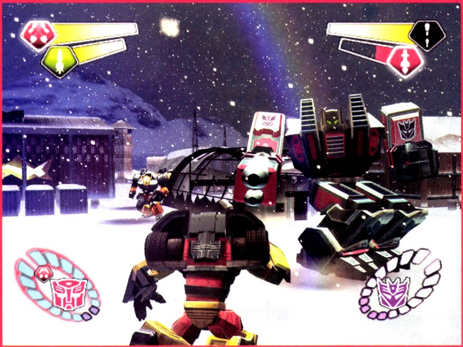
TELL MEGATRON THAT HE MADE A MISTAKE.
DIS À MEGATRON QU'IL A FAIT ERREUR.
DILE A MEGATRON QUE SE EQUIVOCÓ.

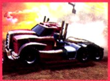
COMICS

Transformers has four mini-comics (mini-coms?) to unlock. They're based on the *Armada* and *Energon* universes, which both feature characters who apparently repeat their English phrases in French and Spanish.

MERS

GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL!





ROLL OUT!
The Autobots can switch from giant robots into vehicles at any time with the press of a button. Hot Shot turns into a speedy sports vehicle, while Optimus Prime changes into a relatively slow semitruck. Red Alert transforms into a sport-utility vehicle that combines speed and bulk. Generally, transforming is useful for evading enemy attacks or traveling in speedier fashion from one point to another. But it also depends on level design—if there's a dense forest or a narrow passageway with sharp drops on either side, it's not a good idea to transform.

It's not cool when a company tries to sell nostalgia. But it's a little easier to tolerate such evil for something like *Transformers*. For one thing, this game isn't connected to the original *Transformers* generation, so there's no direct plundering of fond childhood memories. Second, the game is based on the horribly mutilated *Transformers Armada* series, which almost blatantly rides the coattails of *Pokémon*. Standing in for cute, fuzzy creatures are small, transformable Mini-Cons (which *should* be called Pokécons, so that's what I'll call 'em), and each possesses special powers that make life easier for robots in disguise.

The crux of *Armada* actually works well within the realm of a game. Optimus Prime, Hot Shot, or Red Alert can equip only four Pokécons at a time, and they also have limited amounts of Energon to spare, making it impossible to equip the four most powerful Pokécons at once. It comes down to determining the best combination of them for each mission.

Of course, you have to find the Pokécons first. Each level hides several of them; while most are incredibly easy to find, some are accessible only with other Pokécons. Naturally, this results in some backtracking if you want to collect 'em all—which you probably will. It sounds like a chore, but since the Autobots are so incredibly powerful by the end of the game, exploring the massive environments is surprisingly fun.

The combat in *Transformers* lacks excitement, however, since it mainly involves repeated circle-strafing mixed with an occasional sneak attack. I can't fault the A.I. for this—enemies dive out of the way while you attempt to run them over as a car, take cover when they're under assault, and always look for higher ground. But while encounters with the underling Decepticlones are somewhat dull, **Decepticon boss fights are actually quite intense and difficult—at least until a weakness is revealed.**

That is, of course, if you can recognize a weakness after the sheer size of some bosses shuts down your brain. These foes can be huge—Tidal Wave is an aircraft carrier the size of 10 Autobots stacked on top of each other, while Unicron is the size of a small planet. Along with some impressive level detail, *Transformers*' engine displays Melbourne House's technical wizardry.

Transformers is one of those games that amounts to more than the sum of its parts. Yes, nostalgia factors into the equation, but despite the parts that don't sound very appealing, there really is good game here for anyone to enjoy. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

If gathering all of the Mini-Cons isn't enough motivation to investigate every square inch of the Amazonian rainforest or the frozen tundra of Alaska, there are dozens of extras to unlock by searching for different types of Data-Cons as well.

TOYS
This extra actually has three sections: instructions on how to transform certain characters, images of toys that made it into production, and illustrations showcasing individual characters from *Transformers Armada*, like Unicron here.

MOVIES
Unlock all of the CG movies by progressing through the game. There's nothing too special about this section, since it's mostly old stuff, but it comes in handy if you want to check out the story without playing through again.

MUSIC
Listen to the soundtrack from the game and special remixes of the good ol' *Transformers* theme. The band Dropbox has two songs, one of which is from its album. Either way, any version of the theme song without lyrics is bunk.

TV SPOTS
The best extra of them all. Remember the *G.I. Joe* public-service announcements? Well, *Transformers* did them, too, so sit back and watch a giant robot explain why it's a good idea to wear a life preserver or why it's wrong to steal a car.

TRANSFORMERS

SPECIAL
The last section in the extras feature contains all sorts of promotional material for *Transformers*, including various advertisements and a look at the minicomic based on the game.

PlayStation RATING

PROS Looks gorgeous, collecting Mini-Cons can actually be fun, enemies respond with great intelligence, you can transform (!)
CONS Not much to combat

Pub. Atari Dev. Melbourne House ESRB Teen MSRP $49.99

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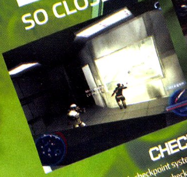
SYPHON FILTER THE OMEGA STRAIN

SO CLOSE TO GREATNESS, AND YET SO, SO FAR

Jenny
[Viper]
Interact



CHECK YOURSELF

The Omega Strain's checkpoint system is, frankly, bizarre. Checkpoints are exclusively location based; that is, if you hit a checkpoint and then, say, blow up a tank, the tank will still be blown up when you respawn—you'll just get sent back to an earlier location. This seems like a fine system for making steady progress through a level. Trouble is, this system applies even during the stealth sections. So if you hit a checkpoint and then trigger an alarm, you will respawn with the alarm still blaring.

That's just ridiculous. It requires you to completely restart a level from scratch if you want to hit all the objectives, which requires quitting all the way back to the Main menu because for some unfathomable reason, there is no option to restart a level in the Pause menu. And don't get me started on the fact that failing certain mission requirements ends some missions altogether; these, of course, are most prevalent in levels with already infuriating stealth segments.

Team member required

If you know *Syphon Filter*, you know that a complex, convoluted plot is one of the hallmarks of the franchise. Allow me to clue you in to one of the central plot points of *The Omega Strain*: All enemies are psychic.

At least, that's the only explanation I've been able to come up with for why they can see me around corners, instantly communicate my location to every other terrorist in the known universe, and converge upon my respawn location before I even appear there.

Not since *Red Faction II* have enemies been so...unnatural. This would not be such a problem if the control scheme didn't feel like something straight out of 1997. In a world with *SOCOM* and *Splinter Cell*, there's no reason to use an antiquated single-stick movement scheme.

I understand that *Syphon*'s lock-on targeting makes the strafe-and-turn, dual-stick control scheme less of a necessity. Trouble is, the targeting system doesn't work so well, either. In a heated firefight, it tends to pick the enemy closest to the center of your viewpoint instead of the enemy closest to *you*. The result is that you get capped from behind far too often. I swear, if I hear "Agent Cobra is down" *one more time*....

OK, deep breath.

I know I'm ranting here. This is just infuriating because the game *could* have been spectacular. **The story is prime *Syphon* goodness, with twists and turns aplenty and several very poignant moments.** The long, varied missions generally feature nonlinear setups and lots of opportunities to earn bonuses. The build-your-own-agent scheme provides plenty of rewards for exceptional play. (Even as frustrated as this game made me, I'm still itching to go back and unlock some of the advanced weapons.) The graphics look nice, too, with some great effects, including some of the best snow I've ever seen.

The online mode is a similarly double-edged sword. I like the co-op gameplay and the alternate paths and bonuses that you can access online only with the help of a teammate. **But there isn't enough additional content to make this a must-play-online title.** And control issues extend to the online mode: The Talk button is Up on the D-pad—so it's impossible (without some manual contortions) to walk and talk at the same time. Ridiculous!

Of course, fans will love the game in spite of all my gripes. If you're immersed in the *Syphon* story line, you'll surely want to know where it leads. It's hard to recommend the game to anyone else, though. If you were looking for the next great shooter to fill the hours between *SOCOM* matches... well, this ain't it. « *Joe Rybicki*

PlayStation RATING

GOOD Fantastic story, lots and lots of unlockables, very sharp graphics
BAD The control scheme, enemy A.I., and checkpoint system are direct attacks on all that is good and holy in the world

Pub. Sony CEA Dev. Sony Bend ESRB Mature MSRP $39.99

[●●●○○]

BACKYARD BASEBALL

WELCOME TO THE LITTLE LEAGUES, KID

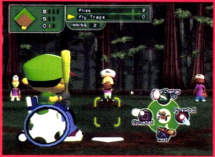
Many kids who play PC games are very familiar with Humongous' *Backyard* franchise (not to be confused with *Backyard Wrestling*—at all). The series signs a few big-name athletes, cutely kid-ifies them, and has them play alongside other tykes.

Backyard Baseball has some cool things in store for its young audience, but it lacks the polish of a good game. For one thing, the control flat-out sucks. I had a rough time moving my fielders, and I can't imagine a child who has yet to add a second digit to his age faring better.

The game also doesn't seem quite arcadey enough. Maybe my hopes were too high for a 21st-century *R.B.I. Baseball*, but can the more sim-type system of choosing a pitch before throwing it really work? It does as a primer to playing *MVP* eventually, but I can't help thinking that a simple "press Down if you want a fastball/press Up if you want a change-up" pitching mechanic would be considerably more fun. Humongous does use the *R.B.I.* baserunning system, though—which is still the best, most intuitive such system ever invented.

Young'uns should enjoy the power-ups for pitching and hitting, and you have to love ballparks such as the Swamp and the Junkyard. Seeing li'l versions of the likes of Nomar Garciaparra, Ichiro Suzuki, Mike Piazza, and Randy Johnson is a hoot, too, but the Backyard Kids have the real personality. As you might imagine, they're a very eclectic, politically correct group of youngsters (one kid even has a wheelchair), but every now and then, the odd, decidedly non-PC stereotype presents itself. Apparently, Luanne Lui "has trouble with the letter R."

Backyard Baseball should please its intended audience. It's just too bad it can't please us big kids, too. « *Chris Baker*



PlayStation RATING

PROS Generally fun and lighthearted, easy for most kids to pick up and play, best baserunning of any current baseball game
CONS Horrible controls, it's not the second coming of *R.B.I. Baseball* it should be

Pub. Atari Dev. Humongous ESRB Everyone MSRP $19.99

[●●◐○○]

MLB 2005 PSone™

WILL THEY EVER STOP MAKING 'EM? (NO!)

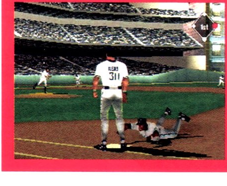
The USP concept (short for "unique selling proposition") is a hallmark of effective marketing techniques. The theory behind it: By pinpointing the one thing your product excels at as opposed to the competition—its USP—and exploiting the heck out of it, the focus of your efforts will sell, sell, sell.

So, what's the USP for *MLB 2005* on PS1? "The only MLB game on PSone this season!" exclaims the front of the box. In other words, the fact that it *has no* competition. Pretty pathetic, huh?

It's easy to see why Sony's marketing department phoned this tag line in: It really is about all you can boast about regarding the game. That's not to say the game is bad—it's everything it's ever been, for better or for worse. You see, as far as gameplay is concerned, absolutely nothing has changed since last year's addition (and, quite possibly, the one before that...and the one before that). It still features the same cursor-based system the PS1 version of the series has utilized for years, which is all well and good—but you'd think at least one designer might care enough to add something semicool. Nope. They haven't even bothered to fix the "let's hold the runner on second base" faux pas.

Quite literally, the only new additions to *MLB 2005* are a new opening movie (borrowed from its stronger PS2 brother), a revised interface, updated rosters, a small bit of Vin Scully/Dave Campbell commentary, and the addition of the new Petco Park in San Diego. That's it, baseball fans.

The game actually provides its own new definition to the USP acronym: unnecessary sports product. « *Chris Baker*



PlayStation RATING

HITS Generally solid game of baseball, they actually bothered to render Petco Park
WHIFFS You can buy a used (maybe even new!) *MLB 2001* for 25 bucks less—and you won't see many differences at all

Pub. Sony CEA Dev. 989 Studios ESRB Everyone MSRP $29.99

[●●◐○○]

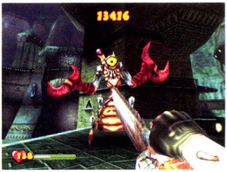
SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

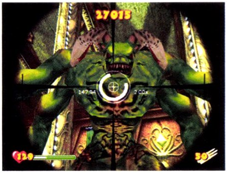
BLOW STUFF UP

MORE SERIOUS SAMS

A list of some other Sams in videogame history:

- Sam (*Sam & Max*)
- Sewer Sam (*Sewer Sam*)
- Sam Houser (Rockstar)
- Samanosuke (*Onimusha*)
- Pajama Sam (*Pajama Sam*)
- Sammy (company)
- Yucatan Sam (*Quintana Roo*)
- Sam Fisher (*Splinter Cell*)
- Sam Kennedy (1UP.com)





When *Serious Sam* came out on PC, gamers were surprised that a throwback to the *Doom* era of shooters ended up being so fun and full of, in the words of the developer, "frantic action feeling." *Serious Sam: Next Encounter*, like the original, is a total regression into the *Doom* years of first-person-shooter design—which is either tired or glorious, depending on your mood.

To say that *Sam* is basically *Doom* with bright colors and more monsters is not wholly inaccurate. There are "puzzles" throughout, which range from jumping to collecting key cards, but most of the game is spent circle-strafing around legions of respawning critters. In addition to the lengthy single-player campaign, you also have a co-op mode and some traditional online modes. Both online and co-op play is silky smooth with nary a slowdown in sight (a decent side effect from semioutdated technology). This version even one-ups the PC and Xbox games by adding vehicles.

Sam has some of the craziest yet most ingenious enemies in a shooter—I dare you to come up with a better enemy than the headless screaming kamikaze bomber. In addition to being totally insane and nonsensical, a lot of these baddies are just plain big—some bosses fill up your screen.

It may not be *TimeSplitters*, but in the right frame of mind, *Sam*'s a guilty pleasure filled with, well, "frantic action feeling." « *Thierry Nguyen*

PlayStation RATING

SERIOUS THOUGHT
So what if it lacks anything resembling A.I.? Or if monsters literally drop out of the sky? One need not reinvent the wheel in order to rock seriously.

Pub. Global Star Dev. Climax ESRB Mature MSRP $19.99

[●●●◐○]

CORVETTE

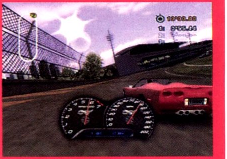
BARGAIN-BASEMENT NEED FOR SPEED KNOCKOFF

Although the suggested retail price for *Corvette* is $20, you can easily pick it up for half that amount—and for that, it's an absolute bargain. Much like EA's foray into single-manufacturer games, *Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed* (2000 on PS1), *Corvette* is all about the history and heritage of a much-loved car brand. The game covers the entire history of Chevy's best car, from the C1 up to the last edition of the C5 (the new-generation C6, which rolls into showrooms this fall, isn't included), with special editions and race cars included for the real fanboys.

In terms of gameplay, *Corvette* is a straight lift of the *Need for Speed* formula. If you played *Hot Pursuit* on PS1, imagine a kind of single-make version of that. The look and feel of the game owes a lot to EA's franchise, right down to the cops in sports cars chasing after you and trying to run you off the road.

The graphics are more than competent throughout, with the only letdown being the other traffic on the roads—cars that aren't Corvettes are boxy and unimaginative bits of scenery clutter. The Vettes all look great, though—especially the more interesting-looking early models—and everything down to the unique instrument binnacle in each car is lovingly reproduced.

Let's face it, though—if you're not a Vette lover, you're going to pass over this. It's not a gamer's game, it's a Corvette fan club member's game. GM dealers must love it. If they can hand this to someone thinking of buying a C6, it gives them everything they need to know about the car's heritage. The fact that it's a wholly inoffensive driving game to boot is an added bonus. « *John Davison*



PlayStation RATING

PROS Plays like *Need for Speed*, very affordable, doesn't look too bad
CONS Lacks appeal if you're not a Vette gearhead

Pub. Global Star Dev. Steel Monkeys ESRB Everyone MSRP $19.99

[●●●◐○]

SATURDAY NIGHT SPEEDWAY

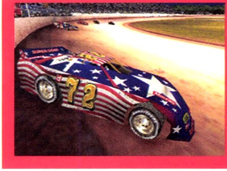
A NICHE WITHIN A NICHE WITHIN A NICHE

Like many game genres, racing is subdividing into little niches that cater to quite specific tastes—and *Corvette* isn't the only one this month. *Saturday Night Speedway* focuses on speedway—if you're not familiar with it, just imagine NASCAR on dirt and you're pretty much there. The courses are smaller, the races are shorter, but it's the same basic principle.

Saturday simulates three different brands of speedway, featuring stock cars, midgets, and "late models," which are essentially NASCAR vehicles. None of the cars are licensed, which facilitates some nice smashing and banging, and most models within the same class look virtually identical, save for the paint job.

A few things need to be noted when considering if this game is for you. First, you've got to have an interest in the sport. If you're just a car fan or a racing fan, *Saturday* isn't necessarily going to push your buttons. It has many of the visceral qualities of NASCAR, and the addition of the slippery dirt surface makes sliding more fun, but if you're in the "turning left is boring" camp, avoid it. Second, it's a $20 game, and with that in mind, it's great for speedway fans. It doesn't hurt that the controls are spot on, the sound is good, and the graphics move at a fair old lick, either. *Saturday* won't win any awards for presentation, but it's all competently put together.

There are better racing games out there, but Ratbag's ongoing mission to evangelize more specialized motor sports has to be admired to some degree. « *John Davison*



PlayStation RATING

PROS Great handling physics, cool sounds, and you get Atari stickers in the box. Whee!
CONS Not everyone loves speedway, there isn't much variety, gets boring quickly

Pub. Atari Dev. Ratbag ESRB Everyone MSRP $19.99

[●●◐○○]

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE

EAST MEETS WEST AND THEN MEETS NOW

Onimusha 3: Demon Siege awes you before you even hit Start. The best full-motion-video sequence in PlayStation history kicks things off—it's so good, I'd recommend that people should at least rent the game just to watch these thrilling seven minutes. Not that *you* need to for that reason—the entire thing is right there waiting for you on this month's demo disc. But then again, **the actual game that follows does little to disappoint.**

That is, unless you're aching to hit buttons all the time. *Demon Siege*'s story-driven nature means that, especially at the beginning, you'll go for several minutes at a time watching the plot advance. But at least it's an interesting plot. Even though Jubei Yagyu defeated the resurrected lord of the Genma demons in *Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny*, Nobunaga Oda returns (somehow...do we really need an explanation?) with plans to rule over not only feudal Japan, but also modern-day Europe. With the help of the nautilus-headed mad scientist Guildenstern, ol' Noby now has the power to move objects through time. Oblivious to this are *Onimusha: Warlords* hero Samanosuke Akechi and a French soldier from our time named Jacques (modeled directly after actor Jean Reno). They get a better idea of what's happening, though, when Guildenstern's weird science sends Jacques to Samanosuke's time and Sammy to Paris in 2004.

The events that follow don't always necessarily make sense, but they certainly succeed in holding your interest. That's all most of us really ask for in a videogame story, although you might find yourself chuckling at the "touching" slow-motion reunion shots and corny dialogue ("you'll sleep better in hell"). Kudos to Capcom and its storytellers at Flagship for coming up with such a creative concept and executing it in an interesting way. Both time travel itself and the fish-out-of-water situation commonly seen in movies (like *Crocodile Dundee*!) have never really pervaded videogame stories, but I get the feeling *Demon Siege*'s influence might inspire such devices in game narratives to come.

Even if the story doesn't do much for you, *Demon Siege's* production values still might win you over. Hollywood talent like Reno isn't necessary, but it certainly doesn't hurt. More impressive are the beautiful graphics—I've never seen fire and snow look as good in a PS2 game. The colors add a lot, too, especially when you see 20 or 30 pink, yellow, and white souls flying around the screen. And even though some weird camera angles might occasionally throw you off, the 3D environments look even better than the prerendered 2D backgrounds of the previous two games. To top it off, the music performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic always keeps your blood pumping—as if the hack-n-slash action weren't enough.

And it is. Now with a better combat engine more akin to *Devil May Cry*'s than *Resident Evil*'s (you can opt for the latter...if you're insane), *Demon Siege* gets further depth by adding its second protagonist. Sammy uses blades, while Jacques prefers

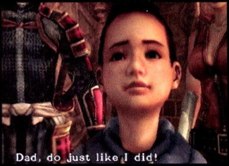
continued on page 99

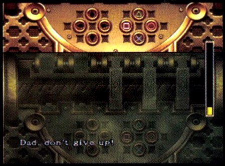
SAMANOSUKE
Once upon a time, Samanosuke Akechi was just an awesome samurai. In *Onimusha 3*, he's a full-fledged badass.

ENJOY THE MOVIE

PlayStation
DVD
PlayStation 2

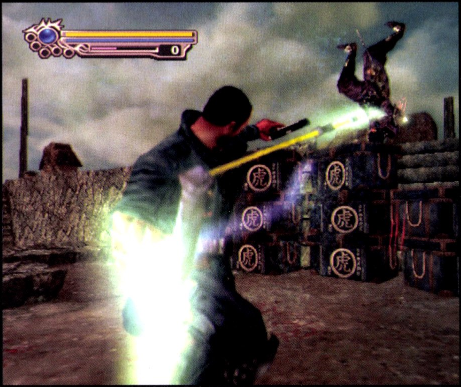
Sit back and enjoy the feast for the eyes that opens *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*. What we have for you here is a subtitled version with all speech in Japanese. In the actual game, it's all dubbed (pretty well, actually) to English.





THAT ONE PUZZLE...

Warlords had the sliding-tile puzzle in the water chamber. *Samurai's Destiny* had the gate that you have to open with the analog sticks. The one puzzle that will probably kill you a couple of times in *Demon Siege* features Jacques in a gas chamber of sorts. In order to get out, he must enter a series of button presses provided in a *Simon*-like manner, each sent telepathically by his son, Henri, who has just figured out the combination hundreds of years in the future. Don't laugh. That's the power of love, man.



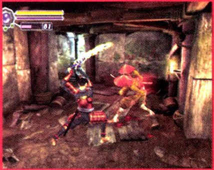
JACQUES PREFERS WHIPLIKE DEVICES PERFECT FOR "HELL YEAH!" MOMENTS.

JEAN RENO?

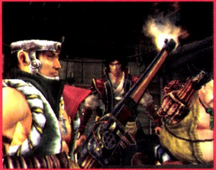
Capcom said all along that Jean Reno would provide the French voiceover for *Demon Siege*. And he does. Only thing is, it lasts all of half an hour. By the time he meets the fairy, Ako, who uses her magic translation ability, Jacques is speaking the same tongue as Samanosuke (i.e., English). This is all fine and good if you can get past the fact that the actor taking his place, Paul Mercier, sounds *nothing* like Reno—not even French. And no, hardcore folks, you can't play the whole game in Japanese.

PAUL MERCIER
You might recognize the English-speaking voice of Jacques in *SOCOM II* (Specter) or *.hack* (Bear).

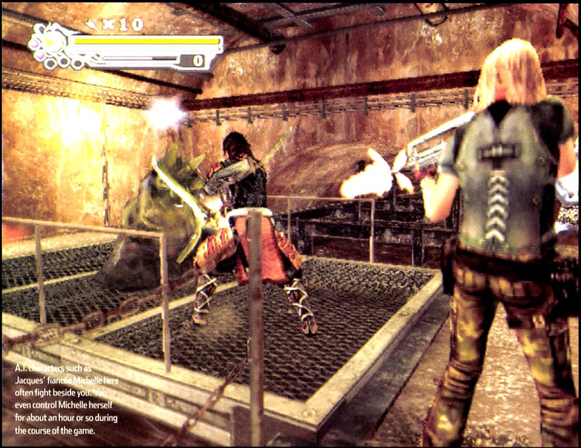
WE PLAYED THEM FOR YOU



So what if you didn't play the first two *Onimusha*s? Here's all you really need to know: The series debuted with *Onimusha: Warlords* (left), wherein Samanosuke first set out to defeat the newest officer in the Genma demon army, the resurrected Nobunaga Oda. Noby walked away at the end, though, after Sam defeated his big serpentine boss, Fortinbras.



Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny (right) featured a new historical Japanese dude named Jubei Yagyu who actually did defeat Nobunaga—but not without some help. The way Jubei treated four other warriors he met determined who would help him out as playable characters. The story also branched in many directions, depending on your actions.



A.I. characters such as Jacques' fiancée Michelle here often fight beside you. You even control Michelle herself for about an hour or so during the course of the game.

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more whiplike devices (perfect for "hell yeah!" moments like grabbing a Genma and slinging him hard to the ground). Both have elemental magic available, depending on the equipped weapon, which adds some excellent variety to the constant hack-n-slash.

Things slow down a bit when you need to solve a puzzle—though few will actually puzzle you. Most are a matter of "find a dead end, go a different route, find the key, then advance"—very basic adventure-game fare. That doesn't mean the occasional interesting obstacle fails to present itself. I particularly enjoyed the challenging chest-opening puzzles that return for a third time and the tile-stepping puzzle that reminds me of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

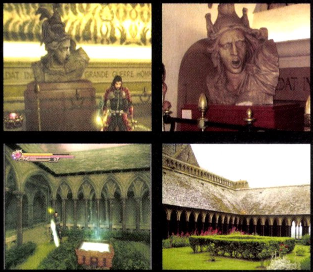
The game even uses time travel as a puzzle element. With the help of an annoying time-walking fairy named Ako (she's pretty much the Jar Jar Binks of *Onimusha*), Jacques and Sam can pass items through the ages to help each other overcome obstacles. It only happens in a couple of locations, and, frankly, it grows a bit tedious. However, the occasional clever, if a bit hard to believe, puzzle does present itself. My favorite: Sam needs a way to climb down a huge wall at Mont-Saint-Michel, so Jacques plants some vegetation in the past. Centuries later, a full-grown plant appears as the perfect makeshift ladder. (Apparently, generations of gardeners have failed to notice the 200-foot weed growing up the side of one of France's most beautiful landmarks.)

If one thing bugs me about *Demon Siege*, it's the hours of gameplay added by the repetitive gauntlet of enemies *Onimusha* veterans know well as the Dark Realm. And it's not just the repetition that grows tiring—it's using Ako's ability to heal you (one of her several helpful powers, keeping me from totally hating her) between dungeon levels. It's great—and essential—that you take advantage of this, but the process takes *forever*. Of the 16-plus hours I spent playing through this game, four or so were spent Dark Realming it. What a pace killer.

That said, the rest of *Demon Siege* moves along well for the most part, providing a solid balance of Jacques and Sam. Although not quite as deep as the last game, this newest *Onimusha* compensates with its more user-friendly control scheme and all-out production values. It's pretty damn fun, too. If you play only one *Onimusha* game in your lifetime, make it this one. « *Chris Baker*

REAL PLACES

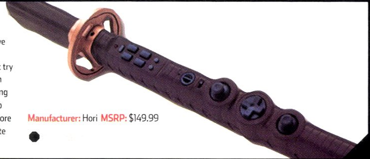
You may have never been to France, but some of *Demon Siege*'s settings offer the next best thing. Below, compare the game versions of the inner Arc de Triomphe (top) and the interior of Mont-Saint-Michel (bottom) to actual photographs.



First it was Jubei Yagyu, and now...

KATANA: THE SOUL CONTROLLER

Just by looking at this 38-inch controller shaped like a sword, you might not understand how it works. Well, I've used the thing and I still don't get it. It was supposedly designed for *Onimusha 3*, but you'd never know it—just try using the Soul Controller to get past the first semitough guy. You can't. The awkward button placement (including shoulder buttons right where you grip it—you can't help but press them most of the time) makes this nothing more than a handsome, superexpensive expression of ultimate gamer geekiness. Which, granted, it does quite well.



Manufacturer: Hori **MSRP:** $149.99

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Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine RATING

REVIEW HAIKU

Travel through time in
the best *Onimusha* yet.
Kick-ass intro, too!

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

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